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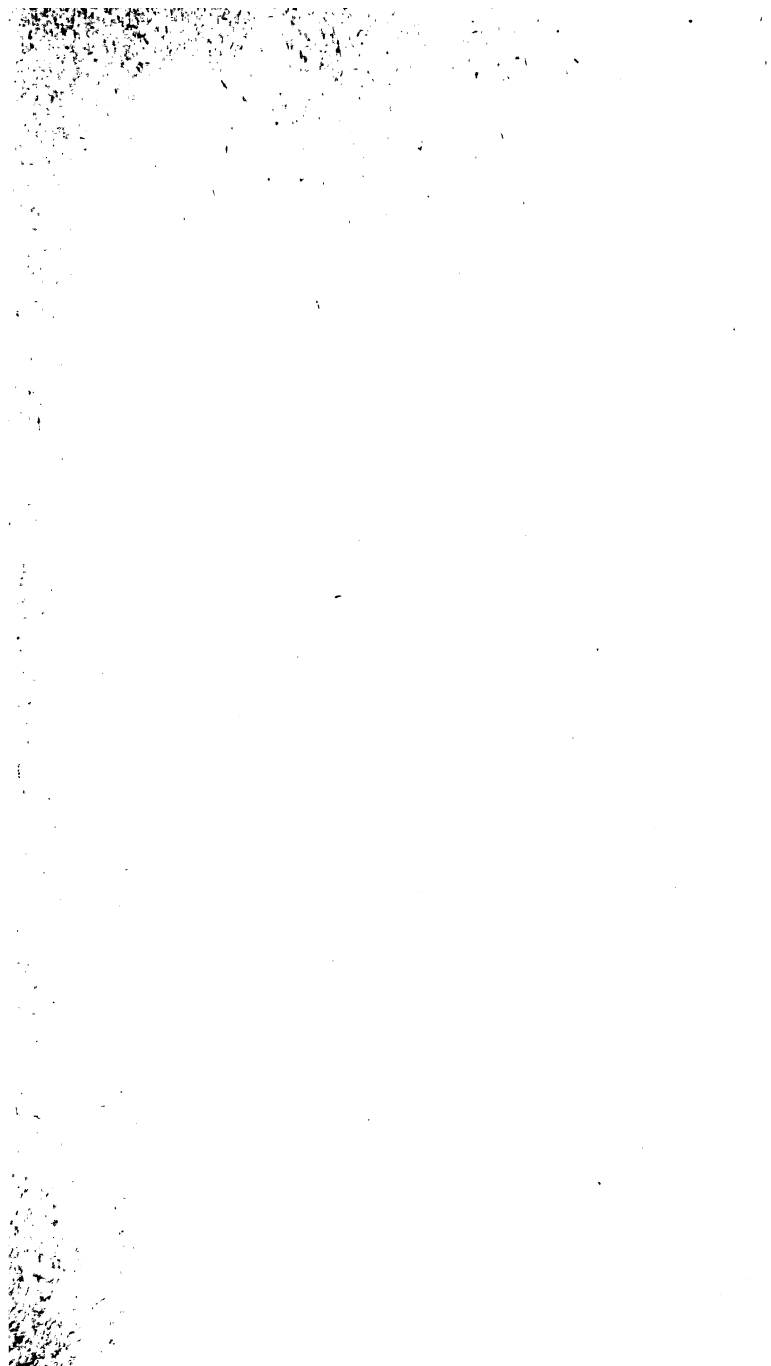
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[by Thomas Haynes Bayly]

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DAVID DUMPS;

OR,

THE BUDGET OF BLUNDERS.

A TALE.

BY

THOMAS HAYNES BAYLY.

IN ONE VOLUME.

PHILADELPHIA:

E. L. CAREY AND A. HART.

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DAVID DUMPS.

CHAPTER I.

DRAMATISTS are apt to suppose the scene of a tragedy must of necessity be placed in a palace or a senate-house, and that the hero, if not actually heir to a crowned head, must be one of the blood-royal, or a noble of the highest rank. This is quite a mistake; for the "domestic tragedy" comes much more home to the feelings, because the adventures and sufferings of the actors are such as it might by chance be our own lot to encounter.

Romance-writers are also fond of the tower and the turret, the terrace and the tapestried chamber; and the hero walks forth in cloth of gold and a plumed cap, while the heroine sits in her bower, in white satin, with strings of pearls round her alabaster neck.

Novel-writers are worse than all. High life is their only sphere, and we must imagine that we sit in the chambers of the aristocracy, fragrant with all manner of exotics, and shaded with rose-coloured curtains,

"Whilst we are told how a duchess
Conversed with her cousin the earl!"

We have nothing of the kind to offer to the reader in the following pages. Our hero rises (whilst his spirits sink,) from a very low grade of society; the heroine is one of what is called the middling class; and the adventures, though deeply tragic, and quite enough to make

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W. Allen

any mortal hero pine away to a very skeleton, are thoroughly domestic, and not only such as might have happened to any one of us, but such as have actually befallen *somebody*.

We do not say that events of the most unforeseen and thrilling nature will not be found in these pages; but knowing the prevailing mania of the reading public, we deem it right to state, to prevent disappointment, that in the following true story we shall never once lead the way into the mansion of a nobleman, nor do we even intend to cross the threshold of a member of parliament. By making this candid avowal, we shall considerably diminish the number of our readers; but there will be at least a diminution of the average quantity of disappointment among those who with a yawn throw aside the volume.

Anthony Dumps, the father of our hero, married Dora Coffin, on St. Swithin's Day, in the first year of the last reign.

Anthony was then comfortably off; but, through a combination of adverse circumstances, he went rapidly down in the world, became a bankrupt, and being obliged to vacate his residence in St. Paul's Churchyard, he removed to No. 3, Burying-ground Buildings, Paddington Road, where Mrs. Dumps was delivered of a son, who was christened David.

David sighed away his infancy like other babes and sucklings; and when he grew to be a hobbleddehoy, there was a seriousness in his visage, and a much-ado-about-nothingness in his eye, which were proclaimed by good-natured people to be indications of deep thought and profundity; while others, less "flattering sweet," declared they indicated nought but want of comprehension and the dulness of stupidity. As he grew older, he grew graver: sad was his look, sombre the tone of his voice, and half an hour's conversation with him was a very serious affair indeed.

Burying-ground Buildings, Paddington Road, was the scene of his infant sports. Since his failure, his father

had earned his *livelihood* by letting himself out as a mute or a mourner to a furnisher of funerals. "Mute" and "voluntary wo" were his stock-in-trade.

Often did Mrs. Dumps ink the seams of his small-clothes, and darken his elbows with a blacking-brush, ere he sallied forth to follow borrowed plumes; and when he returned from his public performance, (oft *re-hearsed*,) Master David did innocently crumple his crapes and sport with his weepers.

His melancholy outgoings at length were rewarded by some pecuniary incomings. The demise of others secured a living for him; and, after a few unusually propitious sickly seasons, he grimly smiled as he counted his gains,—the mourner exulted, and in praise of his profession the mute became eloquent.

Another event occurred: after burying so many people professionally, he at length buried Mrs. Dumps. *That*, of course, could not be considered as a mere matter of business. We have before remarked that she was descended from the Coffins,—she was now gathered to her ancestors.

It was not surprising that Dumps had risen in his profession. He was a perfect master of melancholy ceremonies; and as a mute proclaimer of the mutability of human affairs, none could equal him. Never did the summer sunshine of nankeen lie beneath the shadows of his "inky cloak;" never, while his countenance betokened the "winter of discontent," was he known to simper, —even in his sleeve!

Dumps had long been proud of gentility of appearance; a suit of black had been his working-day costume: nothing, therefore, could be more easy than for Dumps to turn gentleman. He did so; took a villa at Gravesend, chose for his own sitting-room a chamber that looked against a dead wall, and, whilst he was lying in state upon the squabs of his sofa, he thought seriously of the education of his son, and resolved that he should be instantly taught the dead languages.

David was superstitious. Though his temper and dis-

position had neither been spirited nor sprightly, his dreams and his fears had been both. From the windows of Burying-ground Buildings he had daily witnessed grave proceedings; and at the witching hour of night, he felt convinced he had seen unearthly sports,—sports *on* the turf, among beings who ought by rights to have been *under* it; and sometimes he had thought that he beheld the new-comers in the grounds beneath his chamber, (by no means pleasure-grounds,) frisking in the congenial paleness of the moonlight.

All this made an impression on him, and he was decidedly a lad of a serious turn of mind.

It has been asserted that our schoolboy days are our happiest. It may be so with high-spirited, daring boys, possessed of a certain degree of talent, sufficient to carry them through the routine of discipline without much study, and yet without the danger of frequent disgrace. With such boys the play-ground and the cake-shop make ample amends for a few hours' fagging. But it is not so with a boy of delicate constitution and of duller temperament: he rises to the drudgery of the school-room, and cakes and cricket offer nothing in atonement for raps on the knuckles.

Sombre as was David's home, it was preferable to school; and he always quitted the paternal roof with a heavy heart.

David was by no means a fool; he could learn his grammar, and plod through an exercise as well as any body. It was in the play-ground more than in the school-room that he got the name of "a dull boy." He did not laugh, and leap, and run about like other boys; he had a dull habit of walking up and down the field thinking of nothing. Then, too, he never seemed to understand a joke until he became the victim of one; and so the big boys constantly made fun of him, and the little boys used to delight in making him an apple-pie bed.

David had a thoroughly good disposition, and never

resented any of these tricks. School-boys never appreciate each other's good qualities (how should they?); and when he looked grave after some practical joke that had inconvenienced and annoyed him, they thought he was sulky and revengeful. Not a bit of it: he often looked at them with wonder and envy, wishing that he had within him the capability of so much enjoyment.

At seventeen, David left school, and resided with his father at Cypress Villa, Gravesend. His father was a miserable man! It is, alas! the mournful and almost inevitable result of leaving off business and being rich! Often had Anthony Dumps, in his days of poverty and *mute* drudgery, sighed, as he put by part of his earnings, for the time when he should be a gentleman and have nothing to do; and that time was now arrived, and he actually did nothing from morning till night; and a very miserable state of existence he found it.

Anthony Dumps would now and then, unknown to any body, slip on a suit of old mourning, and steal out to follow in the wake of some funeral: it was refreshing to him, it reminded him of old times; but still it was an unsubstantial stolen enjoyment, it produced no remuneration, and he was an unnoticed unimportant personage.

"Your son is growing up," said a neighbour to Mr. Dumps, one day; "what do you mean to make him?"

"Nothing at all," replied he, drawing himself up, and putting his hands in his breeches' pockets.

"Nothing!"

"Certainly not; I've made plenty of money for an only child, and David shall enjoy himself."

What a sad mistake this was! That same "nothing at all" is the most fatiguing *profession* a man can enter. We do not by any means mean to say that all men ought to bring up their sons to the same trades in which they themselves plodded and prospered: but we would have the rich tradesman educate his son for a profession, and snatch him from the *ennui* which is the inevitable bane of him who has no occupation."

Only look at the men of a certain age who *are* and

have been all their lives inactive. With plenty of money in their pockets, but without a pursuit, to them the daily gossip is important, and their own rheumatisms are matters of serious cogitation, and talked about to every unfortunate acquaintance whom they can lay hold of by a button.

But David was to be "*nothing at all*;" and, though "*nothing can come of nothing*," his father was disappointed that people did not *make much of him*; and seeing him sit sad and silent for hours together, looking at dull books, without appearing ever to turn over a page, he one day said—

"David, this won't do!"

"What won't do, sir?" replied David, dropping his book.

"Why, you must see more of the world, and the world must see more of you."

"How so, sir?"

"Why, David, you see I'm no gentleman—never was, and never shall be."

"No, sir?"

"Well, then, you *are* a gentleman."

"Am I, sir?"

"'Am I, sir!' Yes, to be sure; haven't you had learning, and fine clothes, and pocket-money? and didn't I bring you up to be *nothing at all*?"

"Yes, sir," said David, sighing.

"You've now left school ten years."

"Ten years!"

"Yes, you are seven-and-twenty; and since you've been at home with me, you've lived the life of a *perfect gentleman*; and that's a great comfort to a father. You've never had to do one single thing but get up of a morning, put on your clothes, eat, drink, and walk about, undress at night, and go to sleep. As to your reading, that was all your own choice; and I don't believe you've done much of that."

"I some times think I should be happier, sir, if I had something to do."

"What do you mean?" inquired his father.

"Why, I sometimes wish you had brought me up to something."

"It is not genteel, David."

"Isn't it, father? Well, I don't know; perhaps I might be happier without being genteel."

"For shame, David!"

"Why, *you're* not genteel, father."

"No;—but then I hanker after business, because I was brought up to it, and because I remember the time when I and your mother shouldn't have had a crust to eat if it hadn't been for the shop."

"What misery!"

"Misery! not at all:—it's much more miserable to me getting up now just to look out of the window, or take a walk and come home again. I was brought up to business, therefore *I* misses it; but you were brought up to be *nothing at all*, so it ought all to come natural like."

"Well, but I don't think it does, father."

"I tell you what it is, David: I don't think I'm good company for a gentleman,—you must go away and see the world."

"Oh, that would be a deal of trouble, father; can't I stay at home and read about it?"

"No; you must go away,—you see you've nobody here ~~to~~ keep company with; for when I left off business and came here, I couldn't, for your sake, associate with those I used to be hand-and-glove with; and then I believe the bettermost people hereabouts voted me a vulgar old chap—and they were not far wrong; but between the two we know nobody almost: so, just go your ways, draw for as much money as you like, and come back and tell me all about it. I shall be lonesome enough without you; but won't it be a great day when you return?"

David was not accustomed to oppose his father, or any one else; therefore, when a trip to France was proposed, he gently pleaded that, though pretty well

grounded in Greek and Latin, his schoolmaster had not initiated him in the mysteries of French: but being assured that English would go a good way every where on the coast, and that a gentleman who was nothing at all, could always make himself understood, unlocking the comprehensions of all who approached him with a silver key, he yielded without further controversy,—bought a guide-book, a little book of French phrases, a few additions to his wardrobe, and then taking an affectionate leave of his only parent, he bade adieu to Cypress Villa, Gravesend.

David had been educated among the sons of gentlemen; therefore, though he had never seen any thing of society, his manners could not be called vulgar, though they were certainly eccentric.

CHAPTER II.

With a purse well lined, and a large black leather trunk, David Dumps left home and embarked at some wharf in Tower Street on board a packet which, for the small sum of five shillings, was to convey him to Boulogne-sur-Mer in eleven hours.

There is a great charm in cheapness : but the worst of it is, so many people are beguiled into nibbling at the same bait, and, (as in the present instance,) so many are caught in the same trap. There were nearly three hundred passengers in the boat which conveyed David across the Channel ; and bad as sea-sickness must be at the best, publicity certainly adds to its annoyances.

David (accustomed to *sables* from his boyhood) had provided himself with a very handsome and costly real sable cape, which, covering his shoulders, descended to his middle : he was sitting near a young lady who appeared greatly to admire it.

"I beg your pardon,—a very handsome tippet—real sable, I believe?" said she.

"It is, ma'am," said he, turning to her for one moment, and then yielding to the necessity of putting his head over the side of the vessel. There was a pause ; and when he was again able to look before him, his neighbour said,

"Very costly, I suppose?"

"What, ma'am?" inquired David.

"That tippet, sir," said the lady.

"Yes : thirty pounds."

"Thirty pounds!" cried the lady. "Of course you know they will seize it at the custom-house,—this is, unless *your wife* wears it ashore."

"I have no wife," said David, shaking his head with nausea.

"Dear me! it's quite a pity you should lose it, as you certainly will."

"What! lose my cape?"

"Cape! you may call it a cape if you will, but it's neither more nor less than a lady's tippet; and being so, they'll never let it pass on a man's back."

"You don't mean that?" said David, "I would not have it seized on any account."

"Well, sir," said the lady, civilly, "I'll assist you; put it over my shoulders, and I'll pass it through the custom-house with pleasure."

"No! will you indeed!" cried David; "then pray take it at once, for I—really—I beg your pardon—oh, what shall I do!"

And having put his thirty-guinea tippet over the lady's shoulders, he yielded to the humiliating grievance, and was carried down to the cabin, where he lay motionless as the personages long since deposited in the yard adjoining Burying-ground Buildings, Paddington Road.

Talk of Chelsea Reach and Battersea Reach, it's all stuff; what are they to the reachings outside the North Foreland, or between Dover and Calais!

David Dumps was bound for Boulogne, where his anxious parent had urged him to spend a few weeks, and a few naps; at the same time rubbing off rust, and acquiring that air and manner so essential to a gentleman of independent fortune, and so difficult of acquirement when the fortune has been accumulated in small ways of business. It is no easy matter to struggle out of those same *small ways*: all mankind are made of the same dirty clay, no doubt of it; but then they are moulded into different shapes; and afterwards they are baked in different degrees of heat, and some are left bare and unornamented, and others are richly and beautifully painted; not to mention the gilding which is lavishly bestowed on some. Vain is it for the plain unadorned pipkin, after it has once been sent forth into the world,

to expect to be remodelled, and adorned with flowers and gold, like the vase that graces my lady's chamber!

To descend from metaphor and tell the honest truth, David was (like ourselves) no beauty, and was, moreover, (like many that we know of,) most unfit to appear among persons of refinement. But David knew not this; he had heard from his father that money made the man, and while he could chink his purse in his pocket, he felt confident in being looked upon as a perfect gentleman.

His landing at Boulogne, which might almost be considered his *début* in life, (for we wish to pass over his former funeral performances,) was calculated to alarm and agitate so inexperienced a youth: sea-sickness humiliates and brings down the spirit of the bravest. How dreadful is the sensation of going up, up, up, and then down, down, down; the silly anxiety to cling to something or other, which all the time moves with you: and then if you get a little bit better and care for drowning, which really sick people utterly disregard, what a consciousness you have of the one little plank which separates you from the fishes!

Travellers who have crossed the Alps or the Atlantic may sneer at David's sensations: he was about to breathe foreign air, and to put his foot for the first time on a foreign shore. But let Mr. Beckford boast of Italy, Mrs. Trollope prate of America, and our dear friend Major Skinner, in his own honest, unaffected, charming style, describe his varied travels so vividly, that we seem to walk with him in the East, as we have often done, and hope to do again, on less interesting ground; still every traveller must make a beginning, and until he goes farther, (and perhaps fares worse,) Boulogne-sur-Mer had to our hero all the charms of novelty, and all the importance incidental to its being the first outlandish place on which he had set his eyes.

He at length reached the extremity of the new pier, the two sides of the harbour stretching into the sea like two long dark horns. For half an hour the tide was not sufficiently high for the vessel to venture over the

bar, and there it lay, rolling and pitching most lamentably: at length a red flag was hoisted as a signal, and it proceeded to the customary place of landing.

After a marine indisposition, what is it that the exhausted sufferer, whether male or female, is most eager to enjoy? Surely seclusion; a temporary retirement from the world, during which to compose the spirits, recruit the body, and restore and embellish the languid, disordered, dishevelled, and cadaverous exterior.

Will it be believed that at Boulogne-sur-Mer, among the fashionable *public amusements* may be reckoned "going to see the packets come in and to watch the passengers land!" To be sure, there is nothing too insignificant to attract the attention of idle people: in country towns, a little group is always assembled to see off "the Telegraph," or "the Dart;" and we once heard of some young ladies who resided in a village on the high road from London to Bath, who, knowing well the hour when it might be expected, always "dressed to meet the coach!" Perhaps one or all may have been rewarded by winning the whip-hand of a youth on the box, or the heart of a middle-aged gentleman in the interior; but we know nothing of the result.

The packet arrived at Boulogne just in time for the passengers to disembark before a particularly crowded and elegant audience. Those who dined early had come forth for their evening promenade, and those who dined late had not yet retired to dress for dinner. An ample space between the custom-house and the water had been marked out with ropes, and between them the unfortunates were to walk to the bureau where their passports were to be examined. Outside the ropes were ranged the eager audience assembled to witness the farcical arrival. In the front row were pedestrians, and a second and a third row peeped over their shoulders; behind these were carriages of all descriptions, all full of people!

Retreating as far as possible from the ladder, David permitted others to commence the entertainment, and

with a palpitating heart he silently watched their reception. Up went a very fat man, with his very lean wife and three wretched draggletail daughters, whose recent indisposition had been such as to attract the attention of the almost equally suffering David.

At the top of the ladder, the fat man had to support the lean lady; and not well knowing what he was about, he sidled off with his burthen, intending to get under the ropes and make the best of his way to the town. Two dark-green personages in huge cocked-hats belonging to the Douane followed them: the husband in his agitation very nearly dropped his languid lady; the whole party then followed their leaders to the custom-house door, while an audible titter ran round the gazing multitude. Round the entrance was assembled a crowd of the most vociferous biped nuisances ever heard; and these began shouting into their ears in full chorus, each one endeavouring to drown the voice of the other, and thrusting into the faces of the strangers little dirty cards. Each had a different cry, endeavouring to entice the victims to the particular hotel to which he belonged. Another, and another, and another passed up the ladder, (like criminals going to be turned off,) and still David shrank back, until at last he alone remained behind. The steward, however, instead of whispering "I'll not leave thee, thou lone one, to pine on the *stem*" (or on the *stern*) of the vessel, cried, "Come, sir, your turn now, if you please," and giving his arm, assisted him to climb.

"Ah! who can tell how hard it is to climb" (when you're not used to it) a ladder, the stepping-sticks of which lie far apart, and between every one, as you ascend, incommoded by a large cloak, a *sac de nuit* in one hand, a stick and umbrella and a hat-box in the other, you tremblingly look down upon the undulating salt water!

David did not look his best; bad as his best was, he never looked so bad as at this debarkation: the large cloak was a Mackintosh of the exact colour of whitey-

brown paper, which has always appeared to us a most unbecoming garment.

Having at length passed through the ordeal of the examination of passports and the rummaging of persons, David made the best of his way to the kind lady who had undertaken the safe custody of his thirty-guinea sable tippet, and putting out his hands to undo the clasp, he bowed and smiled, saying,

"I really do not know how to thank you!"

"What do you mean, sir?" said the lady, putting up her hands to resist his seizure.

"I am the gentleman,—I see you don't recognise me,—I am the gentleman so much indebted to you for taking charge of that cape," said David.

"Pray what is that man talking of?" said the lady to an Englishman who acted as commissioner of an hotel.

"He says you took charge of that fur tippet, ma'am, and he begs you'll give it back."

"Oh!" almost screamed *the lady*, "this serves me right for coming over in one of the cheap packets! I heard these sort of men were always on board of 'em! My tippet that my uncle bought me at Waterloo House! Is there no law in France?" All this was articulated so loudly, that a crowd began to collect; and David heard it told from one to another that a swindling chap had tried to steal a lady's tippet!

No wonder, then, that poor David, in a foreign land, without one friend, and knowing not one word of the language, should shrink from further contention. He therefore left *the lady* in undisputed possession of his thirty-guinea sables; and having found his way to an hotel, speedily retired to his bed.

CHAPTER III.

THE next morning David rose in tolerably renovated health; and the only unpleasant result of his late voyage was, that his apartment, and all that it contained, appeared to be in motion. After breakfast he was determined to amuse himself; and having inquired his way to the burying-ground, he was charmed with the novelty of its arrangement, and lingered for hours among the flowering shrubs and large wooden crosses which decorate the Catholic tombs. Such contemplations always raised his spirits and gave him an appetite; so he found his way back to the town, and turned into the shop of an English pastry-cook. Like many others of our countrymen, he went abroad principally for the satisfaction of having it to say that he had been there. French society was to be avoided, as a matter of course, and an hotel preferred where a *waiter* instead of a *garçon* was in attendance. French shops, too, were not at all in his way; for whenever he did enter one, he stood looking foolish on one side of the counter, staring at the *marchande* who stood on the other, and, pointing to the article he wanted to purchase, he said nothing but "*Combien?—hey! how much? qu'est-ce que cela?*" It was therefore far more easy and agreeable to go into a pastry-cook's shop and buy an unsophisticated bun, than to seek a *pâtissier* and indulge in a *pâté de groseilles*.

David, whilst munching his bun, could not help remarking a young lady in mourning who was finishing a tartlet. There was always something in mourning deeply interesting to him, and he looked at the lady much more often than he would have done had she been arrayed in white, pink, or blue.

"I wonder who's dead?" thought he: "the body must be buried, or she could not be in public."

The lady paid for her tartlet and departed; and David, eager to follow, as he had been accustomed to do from childhood, the wearer of bombasin and crape, paid also for his delicacies, and followed the dark incognita.

Fortune seemed to favour him; for after pursuing the lady in mourning from the bottom of the Grande Rue half-way down the Porte, she dropped her cambric pocket-handkerchief, and, stepping forwards instinctively to pick up any of the accessories of grief, he took the kerchief and presented it to the unknown. The lady paused, took the offered cambric, smiled, courtesied, and hastily entered her father's lodgings.

David stood like a professional mute at the door of the lady in mourning for a few seconds; but, gradually recovering himself, he remembered that he had not been so fortunate as to make her acquaintance on the *very day* of the burying, and glancing hastily at the drawing-room windows, he returned to his hotel. At the *table d'hôte* he sat next to an exceedingly smart young man, who seemed anxious to enter into conversation with him; and he was soon led into a detail of his morning lounge in the burying-ground, and his interesting interview with the young lady in black.

"You have not been long on the Continent, sir?" inquired the good-looking stranger.

"No, sir."

There was a pause, and the stranger's handsome dark eyes seemed twinkling with some half-suppressed joke; but, recovering his equanimity, he called the waiter and desired him to bring a bottle of champagne. It came, and David found that his liberal neighbour had filled his tumbler at the same moment that he had taken care of himself.

"Your health, sir," said the stranger.

"I'm sure I thank you kindly," replied David, for the first time tasting the sparkling liquor.

"Another glass," said the stranger, "and success to your flirtations with the heiress in black."

"An heiress!" exclaimed David.

"Certainly; and I, who witnessed what passed to-day, observed that she smiled on you in a manner not to be mistaken."

"You don't mean that!"

"I do indeed."

"You don't mean that she loves *me*!" said David, casting a glance at a mirror, and rather pleased than otherwise at the glimpse he caught of his own countenance.

"Take my advice," said his new friend; "go to the theatre this evening, and boldly enter Mr. Tatum's box."

"Mr. Tatum's box!"

"The young lady's name is Tatum: her mother is dead, and she is an heiress to the little old gentleman in a brown wig whose box you will sit in to-night."

"You are very good," replied David; "but I never saw him—I——"

"Come with me; I take an interest in you. I know the lady well; she expects you, and you will be well received."

David was hurried from the table, and, escorted by his amiable companion, he soon arrived at the theatre.

"Now, come here," said his friend, leading him to a box-door on the dress circle, and peeping through the little glass window inserted in it.

"Look! there they are: you must go in."

"Go in!" said David; "impossible! what will they think!"

"Oh, it is too late to recede," replied the unknown; and, knocking loudly at the box-door, he vanished.

A fair hand within immediately threw open the box,

and David stood revealed, ostensibly the individual who had knocked to obtain admission.

A little old man in the front row looked sharply round; and, to David's extreme astonishment the young lady whom he had met that morning recognised him with a smiling bow, and turning to her father, said, "Papa—the gentleman I told you of—he has seen our friends in Bishopsgate-street."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Tatum; "I'm glad to see you, sir: I don't think my daughter mentioned your name." (It would have been very odd if she had, as it is quite certain she did not know it herself.)

"I am Mr. David Dumps, sir," said the intruder in a tremulous voice.

"The son of the *rich* Mr. Dumps, papa," whispered the daughter.

"Oh! the *rich* Mr. Dumps! Dumps! Dumps!—don't know him, never heard of him—very possible!" murmured the old man, looking through a double-barrelled opera-glass, and pretending to attend to the play, of which, however, he did not understand one syllable.

David, as was his habit, said little; but the fair lady in black occasionally addressed him; and he observed that the handsome young man who had been the means of introducing him to this desirable family was seated in an upper box immediately opposite to them,—and as he never took his eyes off them, he naturally concluded that he took a deep interest in his success.

When the performance was over, Miss Tatum took possession of David's arm. Old Tatum put on his great-coat, looked at our hero, and then whispered to his daughter,

"What did you say his name was?"

"Dumps, papa," replied the lady, *sotto voce*.

"Oh,—son of a rich Mr. Dumps, hey?"

"Very rich, papa," added Miss Tatum.

"You had better go on with my daughter," said Tatum; "these steps are awkward;—I'll follow."

And so David and Miss Tatum, one of the prettiest girls in the town, walked home together by moonlight the very first day of his arrival at Boulogne. They did little, it is true,—indeed nothing to the purpose, if the purpose of either was love: but when they parted, Miss Tatum invited him to drink tea with them the next evening; and her father, who hobbled up at the moment, after a hurried repetition of his recent whispers, condescended to second the invitation.

CHAPTER IV.

"Is it possible that I'm in love?" thought David next morning. A pause, and he went on shaving. "Is it possible that the young lady is in love with me?" Another pause,—and he simpered at himself in the glass, and gave his chin another coat of lather. The tacit response which he gave to the last query certainly was not a negative, and David went forth that day with an elasticity of step unknown to him before. At dinner he again sat by his kind friend, whose name was Arden; and when evening closed in, he was urged to keep his appointment and repair to the house of Mr. Tatum. The evening was mild; but Mr. Arden strongly recommended him to wear his ample Mackintosh, which was, as we have elsewhere recorded, the exact tint of whitey-brown paper. He himself assiduously arranged its folds, and then David went forth "a-wooing."

His hand trembled as he knocked at the door of the lodgings, his heart palpitated as he entered the passage; but what were his feelings when he saw the fair lady of the house come smiling from the parlour, and insisting on taking from him his cloak!—she with her own hands removed it from his shoulders and hung it on a peg.

Strange as it may seem after this act of courtesy, he saw little of the young lady during the evening. He and the old gentleman sat opposite to each other, drinking first tea, which was sent into the room ready made, and then toddy, which Mr. Tatum prided himself on brewing after the most approved fashion.

David got on wonderfully with his host, for he was by nature, education, and indeed by hereditary right, a mute,—therefore an admirable listener; and though the old gentleman seldom said any thing worth hearing, he liked to twaddle on undisturbed. Half asleep and half

David sat looking now at the fire, and then at the candles; in the former discovering imaginary funeral processions, and in the latter coffins and winding-sheets. When the hour of departure arrived, Miss Tatum again appeared, took the whitey-brown Mackintosh from its closet, and with a smile, the counterpart of that with which she had disrobed Mr. Dumps and breathed his life into him, she now again cloaked him and saw him de-

David had never thought of loving any body in his life, and the notion of being beloved by a pretty girl with blue eyes, red roses, ringlets, and a nice little foot, had never entered his head. As he slowly returned homewards, he meditated seriously, if not sadly, on the novelty of his position. Mr. Tatum had invited him to renew his acquaintance on the following evening; and Miss Tatum had added her father's request with an earnestness and at the same time a delicate anxiety for his health, that was very touching, "Be sure you come," said she; "and don't fail to wear your cloak, for the nights are chilly." "Is there any thing else more satisfactory?" He folded the Mackintosh more closely round him, and proceeded with a brisker step. David began to consider himself a man of very considerable personal attractions, and he resolved to write to his father, asking permission in due course of time to pop the question to Miss Tatum.

On arriving at ——'s hotel, he walked proudly into the coffee-room, where he found his young friend Mr. Arden apparently anxiously awaiting his arrival; for as he entered the room, he ran up to him, offering his arm and cloak, and taking from him his water proof Mackin-

"Dear me, I couldn't think of such a thing!" said he, blushing at the attentions lavished on him: "I will not leave you."

"Nonsense!" said young Arden; "it is no trouble, it is a great pleasure; and he persisted until he had unhooked the cloak and carried away the cloak to a dispart of the room, where, after folding it with very

great care, he deposited it on a chair, and very afterwards, abruptly wishing his companions good night, he took a candle and retired to his room.

David was not sorry to be left alone, for he preferred thinking of Miss Tatum to talking of her. a late hour he retired to bed, and dreamed that he and the young lady were very happy together driving a Gravesend in a mourning coach.

CHAPTER V.

HUMAN happiness may be said to have reached its climax when a mortal is doubly blessed in the participation of unbounded love and disinterested friendship. Such was at this period the position of our hero: long afterwards, amid the changes and chances of an eventful career, he looked back to these brief hours of enjoyment as forming "the one green spot on memory's waste." But we must not anticipate; *sufficient for the volume are the incidents thereof.*

David saw little of the Tatums during the day. Mr. Tatum pored over newspapers hour after hour at an English reading-room; and Miss Tatum bathed, and dressed, and rode on donkeys, and then dressed again;—indeed she never encouraged him to visit her of a morning. But evening after evening did he pass in her society; his kind disinterested friend always with anxious solicitude wrapping him up in his cloak before he left the hotel; and she, with an insinuating delicacy which entirely won his heart, always taking the cloak from his shoulders and putting it carefully away before he entered her father's presence.

"You will let me introduce you to Miss T.?" said David to his friend in the fulness of his gratitude.

"No, no," said Arden; "I'm not a marrying man."

"A marrying man!" replied David; "what has that to do with it? If you *were* a marrying man, that could not interfere with an understanding already existing."

"Of course not," said Arden, laughing.

"Well; and *not* being a marrying man, you will be welcomed by Rebecca as a friend."

"You are very kind," said Arden, trying *not* to laugh.

"And really," said David, overflowing with sensibility,

"I should be glad to see you friends: for my own part, I never can forget what I owe you." And he seized the right hand of George Arden, and shook it with avidity.

"You are a marrying man?" said George.

"I—that is—of course—if a lady evinces a predilection——"

"True; it is not in the nature of man to be repulsive: but what are your intentions?"

"Honourable, sir!" said David, drawing himself up.

"Of course: but supposing you were married, where do you mean to take her?"

"To Cypress Villa, Gravesend."

"I could not sleep in a place so called for worlds," said Arden with mock solemnity.

"No!" exclaimed David, whose nerves were none of the strongest, and whose slumbers, when he was a boy, had often been disturbed by his consciousness of lying so near a cemetery.

"No," said George Arden; "I should die of fright."

"Oh!" replied David, with an hysterical laugh; "for my part, I have no fears."

"No fears!" interrupted his companion, pushing up his hair so that he looked at the moment in a state of terror.

"I don't mean to ridicule the idea of ghosts," murmured David, turning pale, and betraying to Arden his real sensations.

"Ridicule!" replied his friend; "impossible! I once laughed at supernatural appearances;—shall I tell you the result?"

"Not till daylight, if you please," said David, rising to snuff the candles.

"No time like the present," exclaimed Arden; and extinguishing them both, he added, "Sit you down there, and I will tell you the story by the dim light of the fire."

CHAPTER VI.

GEORGE ARDEN having arranged himself comfortably in an easy chair, began as follows :—

“An old woman’s story, particularly if it had a ghost in it, was from my very boyhood received by me with a laugh or with a sneer. But this is no proof that I did not love old women. Are we not all too apt to trifle with the weaknesses of those who are most dear to us? This incredulity of mine was not, however, calculated to awaken in my elderly friends a reciprocity of attachment; and there was one old woman in particular who evidently disliked my irreverent laugh, and yet seemed determined to win me over to the full enjoyment of the pleasures of her imagination.

“And most imaginative she was; assigning to every old mansion its spectre, to every corner cupboard its supernatural visitant. She could give the most elaborate version of all old stories; and whilst engaged in her narration, she would cast an indignant glance at him who ventured to trace her stories to the excited nerves of individuals, or indeed to any other natural cause.

“She lived in a habitation most congenial to her temperament,—an old Elizabethan mansion forming three sides of a quadrangle, with a large lofty shadowy hall, very long passages, tapestried chambers, and surrounded by a moat. In this house I have spent some of the happiest days of my life; and it was in my boyhood, during the long winter evenings of my holidays, that I first listened to, and first ventured to laugh at, the wonderful stories of old Mistress Douce.

“Though Sally Douce was a very important personage at Maltby Hall, you are not to suppose that she

was the lady of the mansion. My host was Sir Charles Maltby, a young baronet of three-and-twenty; and my hostess, his beautiful bride, was in her nineteenth year. In the schoolboy days to which I have alluded, I had been the guest of older persons, the father and mother of my friend Sir Charles, who was then a schoolboy like myself. But the venerable pair were reposing in peace under the family pew in the neighbouring church; and Charles, my former playfellow, being now a baronet and a married man, invariably gave me a hospitable reception.

Mistress Sally Douce had been housekeeper at Maltby Hall for fifty years; and having been born in a cottage on the estate, she considered herself, and really seemed to be considered by my friend, as one of the family. Charles used to be her greatest pet. Whilst I laughed outright at her marvellous narratives, he laughed only in his sleeve; and when I was affronting the venerable story-teller by a voluntary avowal of disbelief, he would soothe her into smiles by affecting to shudder, declaring at the same time that she made him afraid to turn his head, lest he should see the spectre at his elbow. Still I believe I was rather a favourite: at all events, I was always sure to hear her very best stories told in her very best style. It was indeed natural she should wish to make a convert of so great a sceptic as I professed to be.

"To you I will confess what I never could be induced to own to the old lady. Her stories, or perhaps her manner of telling them, often made a deep impression on me; and my incredulity, at first assumed because I thought the world imputed cowardice to the credulous, was afterwards persisted in, partly from a desire to appear consistent, but principally to irritate Mistress Douce. I carried my bravado so far, that after laughing at all her ghost stories, I declared that to live in a haunted house, to sleep in a haunted chamber—nay, actually to be visited by a real authenticated ghost, would be to me delightful. Then did Sally Douce shake at me her

wrinkled head, point at me her attenuated finger, and solemnly and slowly say, 'Young man—young man, beware of what you say: if the dead can visit the living, when I am buried in Maltby churchyard, we shall meet again!'

"It shortly afterwards seemed but too probable that I should myself be the first inhabitant of that bit of consecrated ground. It was Christmas time; I was, as usual, the guest of my friend Charles: his brothers and sisters were with him, and we were all as gay as health and youth could make us. Often did we sit at midnight in some large tapestried chamber, dark with oak, and purposely left in gloom, while Mistress Douce's clear and solemn voice riveted the attention of the party. When she paused, there was always silence for a minute; and then the spell was generally broken by my most irreverent titter. Then did the old lady look round upon me; the head was again shaken, the finger again pointed, and the words of warning were again repeated.

"It was during this visit that I was seized with a most dangerous fever; and during my illness Mistress Sally Douce was my most devoted nurse; and one day, when weak and exhausted, I said, half in earnest, half in jest, that after all it seemed probable she would receive a *post mortem* visit from me, instead of her fulfilling her oft-repeated promise. She shook her head, pointed her finger, and if she did not audibly add the usual words of warning, I saw that it was only from a consideration of my weak state.

"When I was restored to health, this same warning became quite a jest in the family; and though I had a secret, awkward recollection of having felt chilled when her finger was pointed at me as I lay on my bed of sickness, still I strove to drown the recollection; and when it would not pass away, I laughed more loudly than before, and affected even greater unconcern.

"When I left Maltby Hall, I was about to travel for some months on the continent. I took leave of all my kind companions, who were assembled on the steps to

bid me adieu. After entering the carriage, I called to Mistress Sally Douce, who stood courtesying and wiping her eyes at the top of the flight, saying that I hoped to encounter a real German goblin ere I saw her again. She looked vexed and angry, and with a malicious smile which I never saw upon her face before, she shook her head, pointed her finger, and as the carriage drove off I distinctly heard the oft-repeated words of warning.

"For more than a year I rambled on the continent; and so rapid and uncertain were my movements, that after the first two months I received no communications from my Maltby friends. I returned by the Rhine, visiting all those places most celebrated in the legendary tales of Germany. Here the latent seeds of superstition were called into bud and bloom, and I returned to England fully qualified to be a boon companion to old Mistress Sally Douce; to become not only an attentive listener, but to give her tale for tale.

"As soon as my arrival was announced, I received the kindest letter from Sir Charles Maltby, requesting me to pay the hall a visit. The letter concluded thus: 'Lady Maltby desires me to say we have recently lost your ancient friend Mistress Sally Douce; but the intelligence may be unnecessary, should she have carried her oft-repeated warning into effect.'

"I cannot describe the effect this announcement of a very old housekeeper's demise had upon my health and spirits. I could think of nothing else, I could dream of nothing else; the warning seemed for ever ringing in my ears, whilst I saw the finger pointed and the old head shaking.

"I dreaded going to Maltby Hall: it was not so much that I dreaded *missing* the old lady, as that I anticipated *not missing her*! I thought that though invisible to others, for *me* she might revisit the glimpses of the moon, making night hideous.

"It was, however, impossible I should avow these feelings, and make them a plea for refusing my friend's invitation. On the contrary, I accepted it, making no

allusion in my letter to the death of Mistress Douce; and on the appointed day (it was a dark day in November) I alighted at the door of Maltby Hall. My friends came out to receive me on the steps, and I hastily and involuntarily glanced beyond them to the spot where the old lady had stood on the day of my departure.

"She alone was absent from the group; yet I felt as if she still stood there, shaking her head, pointing her finger, and breathing the never-to-be-forgotten warning! I am sure my friends noticed my abstraction and guessed the cause,—indeed they have since confessed as much; but at the time no notice was taken of it, and no mention was made of the late Mistress Douce. It was time to prepare for dinner when I arrived; and as it was getting dark, my friend escorted me to my room, and placing a light on the table, he left me to attend to my toilet. It was the same room I had occupied during my serious indisposition,—the same bed, the same furniture, all arranged in the same way. There stood the sofa on which poor Mistress Sally for many a night reposed while I needed her attendance; and by the fire I beheld, to the best of my belief, the very same tea-kettle with which she used to make my midnight tea. I would have given the world to have occupied any other room in the mansion. But what was I to do?—expose myself to the avowal of my superstitious dread!—I, who had so often laughed at the fears of others. I hastily changed my dress, and descended to the drawing-room. Dinner was soon announced, and with Lady Maltby on my arm I crossed the spacious hall. It was dimly lighted, and at its extremity we had to pass a corridor in which was the housekeeper's room,—that room which had formerly been the abiding place of Mistress Sally Douce. As we passed I involuntarily started back; I had glanced towards that dark passage, and there—could it be fancy?—I had seen, far off indeed, and dim and shadowy, the form of the old housekeeper herself!

"My companions eagerly asked me why I paused; but having glanced that way a second time and seen

nothing, I attributed my hesitation to the slipperiness of the marble pavement and proceeded to the dining-room.

"Never had I passed so dull an evening in that house, yet never did I feel less inclination to retire for the night; but I was at length obliged to light my candle and prepare for departure. Lady Maltby, ere she left the drawing-room, expressed a hospitable wish that I should be comfortable.

" 'You have got,' said she, 'the same chamber you occupied during your long illness: you will, I hope, find all your old comforts about you; but——'

"She did not finish the sentence; she sighed and left the room, and I felt sure that we were both thinking of the defunct.

"To bed I went; and, leaving a large wood fire burning on the hearth, after a very considerable period I fell asleep. How long I slept, I know not; but I started from a dream of the dead, fully convinced that I had heard a noise in the room. I lay tremblingly awake for a few seconds, and all around me being quiet as the grave, I at length ventured to draw aside the curtains and peep forth. The wood fire had dwindled down to a few flickering embers,—just enough to make every part of the room visible to me, without any part being distinctly so. Far off, in the corner most dim and remote, stood the sofa as it used to stand; and there—did my eyes deceive me!—lay the form of Mistress Sally as she used to lie in the by-gone days of my typhus fever! Was it a shawl, a cloak, a garment of any kind left accidentally there; and did my fears fashion it into the semblance of a human form? It might be so; I would ascertain: certainty could hardly be more terrible than doubt.

"I raised my head, I sat up in bed; still it was no shawl, no cloak, no garment of any kind; it was the housekeeper,—nothing but the housekeeper! I know not what possessed me; there was desperation in the effort,—I called her—called the dead by the same name, and in the same voice with which in the days of my

illness I used to summon the living! There was a pause, and then—oh! how shall I paint my feelings!—the form slowly arose, and in a moment more the eyes of Mistress Sally Douce were fixed upon me! She shook her wrinkled head, she pointed her skinny finger, and though I heard no sound, I knew by the motion of her colourless lips that she was exulting in the fulfilment of her warning words. I moved not,—I spoke not! there we sat gazing on one another, I scarcely more alive than herself!

“At length she moved! She crossed the chamber, and began to prepare, as of old, one of those messes so palatable to a feverish patient; the tea-spoon came in contact with the tumbler without a sound! She silently approached the bed; and when she extended towards me the draught she had prepared, I felt it would be useless to reject it. Though mixed by no living hand, though bearing inevitable torpor to the vitals of the drinker, still I knew that I was doomed to drink. Oh, how I dreaded the icy coldness of that fatal potion! The pale hand was still extended, and with rash impetuosity I put the tumbler to my lips. Oh, hot—hot—burning hot—hotter than the flames of a place that shall be nameless was the supernatural burning of that spell-wrought decoction! With one leap I sprang from my bed to the centre of the apartment, and roaring with pain and terror, I lay extended on the floor.

“The whole family of the Maltbys rushed into my chamber, laughing with a heartiness which could only be equalled by the heartiness of the laugh of—Mistress Sally Douce.”

“Oh, Lord!” said David, pale as death; “I thought it was a ghost! What *did* you do?”

“I very soon swallowed a second tumbler of hot punch; and though I am still on the most intimate footing with the Maltby family, I shall be the very last person to vindicate their conduct.”

“Vindicate!” said David; “it might have been man-

slaughter—it *would* have been if I had been in your place: for goodness' sake, light the candles!"

"Certainly," replied Arden; "and it is now time for you to visit the lady of your love."

Again the disinterested friend cloaked the happy lover, who again was uncloaked by the fair hands of Miss Tatum; and when the clock struck half-past eleven, she again placed the Mackintosh on his shoulders, which, on his return to the hotel, was as carefully removed and folded by the attentive and devoted Mr. Arden.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. TATUM was a retired pawnbroker. To oblige his wife, a tall woman of high notions, the fifth daughter of an apothecary, he had, after much solicitation, given up business and taken a residence on Blackheath. Some people said, however, that, though nominally relinquished, the business was still carried on, under the rose, (under the three golden balls, we should say,) and that he had once or twice been detected standing at the door of a pawnbroker's shop over the door of which appeared the name of Tatum, with his hat off and his hands in his breeches' pockets, (strong symptoms of feeling himself at home,) long after his neighbours on the Heath had been given to understand that he was a gentleman at large. We merely state the rumour; but, pawnbroker or no pawnbroker, we will not *pledge* ourselves to its veracity.

Mrs. Tatum's great object in life was to sink the shop: Mr. Tatum, on the contrary, dreaded prematurely sinking that which had kept him afloat. Though by no means the wisest man in the world, he had discrimination enough to observe that many men, when they left off business, left off pleasure also. It was too late to acquire new habits and turn to new pursuits; therefore when the old ones were abandoned, they led a life of inactivity: and if boys are warned that "Idleness is the root of all evil," he was aware that elderly people would do well to bear in mind that "Inactivity is the source of all misery."

Still, sink or swim, open and decided opposition to Mrs. T. was not to be thought of. Fifth daughter of a gentleman of the medical profession, she stood forth a lady in her own right; and when she did consent to pledge her hand to a pawnbroker, and in a way too

which did not admit of its being redeemed, she was resolved amply to indemnify herself for the degradation by a free outlay of the profits of the shop. Mr. Tatum was considerably older than herself; so that she looked upon him rather in the light of a father,—or perhaps we should say, considering his *trade*, of her *uncle*. He, like all men who marry women younger than themselves, was fond and indulgent; he therefore so far yielded to her solicitations as to withdraw from the large shop in Holborn long known as his residence, and, nominally retiring from business to Blackheath, he reserved a sort of play place, where the pawnbroker's occupation was not quite gone, in a more obscure situation in the city. Mrs. Tatum could not be quite ignorant of this arrangement; but, believing that no one suspected it but herself, she was reconciled to it for two reasons. In the first place, it kept Mr. Tatum out of her way all the morning; and in the second, when he did return, he often brought her little conciliatory offerings in the shape of rings, necklaces, or brooches, the unredeemed pledges of the unfortunate.

We have not yet mentioned that Mrs. Tatum, one day brought him a pledge which gratified him exceedingly: we mean, his only daughter Rebecca.

Becky sucked, and thrived, and squalled, and grew, like other children; and when she in the course of time attained the age of educational troubles, Mrs. Tatum insisted on it that the grand-daughter of Mr. Lint, medical adviser to Lady Mary Jones of Clapham Common, ought to have every possible advantage. Mr. Tatum was therefore to pay down three hundred pounds a year, and Becky was to go to a fashionable seminary in the neighbourhood of town.

There Becky became acquainted with little ladies destined to move in a sphere very different from her own; and she learned that which parents in the middle ranks of life always seem to forget must inevitably be taught in these expensive seminaries—she learned to dislike home, and to look down with contempt on her

father and mother. Becky could talk French, and dance, and play upon the harp and piano; and when she came home, the choicest instruments by Errand and Broadwood were deposited in the front drawing-room at Lavender Lodge, Blackheath: but the young lady was dull and discontented—whom was she to play to? Papa didn't know one tune from another, always excepting that he preferred the loudest; and as for poor mamma, she had no taste. The neighbours—such of them, at least, as had condescended to visit the retired pawnbroker and his wife—were mere Goths, no better than themselves; people moving in no fashionable circle, and on whom Lady Sarah Highgate and Miss Maria Everington, at Miss Perfect's academy, would look down with unutterable contempt. Her holidays were therefore passed in murmurings, and unavailing sighings after things that were unattainable. Mr. Tatum looked at his fine lady daughter, at a respectful distance, with admiration mingled with fear; for often did she reprove him for talking of "them there things," and substituting v's for w's. As for Mrs. Tatum, though often snubbed by the fair Rebecca, she felt all a mother's pride in displaying her to her visitors, and presenting her as "my daughter," though she saw her looking angry at being presented, and openly sneering at those to whom she was introduced.

We mean not to disparage any grade of society. It is easy to throw ridicule on any trade or any profession; but it is necessary, when writing a tale, to invent characters, and to put them into some situation or other. We have made our excellent friend, Mr. Tatum, a pawnbroker; but had he been, like the father of his lady wife, an apothecary,—or had he been a limb of the law, or a merchant, or any one of the very many people who one or another accumulate money enough to do just what they please with their sons and their daughters,—we should say, never send a girl, (born and bred for a humbler, and, God knows, very probably for a happier sphere,)—never send her to an academy, where, from being asso-

ciated with girls of rank and fashion, she is likely to acquire notions and habits utterly at variance with those which await her at home, and which, therefore, must inevitably hereafter make *her* miserable, or cause her to inflict misery on those who are most attached to her.

Becky Tatum at nineteen was miserable at home; and rather than remain there, she returned again to school at an age when she could do no good by going there, and when all her contemporaries had departed. Becky was therefore a sort of unconnected link between the governesses and the school-girls: restraint at her age was out of the question; she was to be considered discreet, and yet was just at the period when the watchful eye of a mother was indispensable. But a dark young man saw her, and admired her, put up his glass, and attracted her attention: she went home and thought of him; next day she met him again; and afterwards she dreamed of him; and when again she met him, she could not help looking conscious: accidentally she dropped her handkerchief, he picked it up; and, when he spoke with civility, how could she avoid answering him? And so again they met, and again they walked, and, without the knowledge of any one who had a right to control her, Becky Tatum formed an intimacy with a good-looking young man of whom she knew nothing.

From an elysium of stolen interviews, Becky was summoned to the bedside of her mother, who, scarcely sensible when she reached her, died during the next night; and though it was impossible that she could be affectionately attached to her, (as some more *homely* and happily educated children are,) still she had too much natural feeling not to feel deeply for her parent, and for the time she was most affectionate in her attentions to her father.

At length they went out to take a little walk together for the first time. They met a very handsome young man, with dark intelligent eyes. He stood before them: Becky fainted dead away; she was carried home by the interesting stranger, and her father, with his hat in his

ripping his face, followed as fast as he could. came to herself, and introduced the charming friend whose society had beguiled her hours at Miss Perfect's academy.

Tatum bowed and smiled, and unbuttoned his coat, and buttoned it again; but the very next day he made every possible inquiry, and, after all, ascertained nothing satisfactory respecting the intriguing stranger.

Tatum at once decided that it would never do. "There matches," said he, "ends in want."

"It may be so, father," said Rebecca; "but I would rather welcome want with him than affluence with another. In your presence I swear to be true to him!"—
—kept her word!

CHAPTER VIII.

WE have said that Becky Tatum swore to prove true to the interesting youth with dark eyes who flirted with her when she was a superannuated member of Miss Perfect's school, and who carried her home when she made a point of fainting on Blackheath. The gentle reader cannot expect us to pass off poor David Dumps as a handsome and insinuating stranger: how then are we to account for the young lady's kind attentions to him? Time will show.

The first months of mourning over, Mr. Tatum, as well as his daughter, wished for change of scene; and having most peremptorily impressed upon Rebecca's mind his determination never to receive the dark-eyed stranger at his house, he embarked on board the Emerald, and he and his family arrived at Boulogne-sur-Mer in twelve hours, at the trifling cost of five shillings each person. Rebecca knew that her father's decisions, once formed, were irrevocable. *She called him obstinate; he called himself firm.*

We must now return to our hero and his friend, the Pylades and Orestes of ——'s Hotel. They had sat together the customary period after dinner, and it was time for David to go forth to drink tea with her whom he now really considered as his intended. George Arden, as usual, brought his cloak; and though it was really sultry, and David declared that he could not endure its weight, he insisted on putting it over his shoulders and fastening the clasp at his throat.

"And won't you walk with me?" said David.

"No."

"And do you never mean to stir out of the house?"

"Oh yes," replied Arden,—"when it suits me."

"To be sure, you have not the inducement *I* have," said David, with a knowing look.

"It is not every body can boast of your attractions," replied Arden with a smile.

Off went David, perspiring under the weight of his whitey-brown Mackintosh; and wanting to make a small purchase, he went into a shop.

"Will you be so obliging," said he, after choosing what he wanted, "as to take care of this cloak for me until the morning? The evening is so hot, I cannot endure it?"

The civil shopkeeper of course readily assented, and Mr. Dumps proceeded to the residence of Mr. Tatum. His knock was now well known; and no sooner was he admitted, than Rebecca came forward, as usual, to take possession of his cloak. He carried none! She seemed amazed at his temerity in braving the evening air without one; and hearing what he had done with it, she earnestly entreated him to return and fetch it. Her words, her looks, were not to be resisted, and David, prouder than ever, walked back to the shop and asked for his cloak. The attentive *marchande* readily produced it; and whilst he was placing it over his shoulders, he said,

"Take care you do not lose the letter."

"What letter?"

"The letter which you have pinned to your cloak:—here it is."

"The letter!"

David took it: he saw it was addressed to Miss Tatum. How very odd! How came it there? what could it mean? He turned it over and over; it was not sealed: he opened it and read it:—

"DEAREST REBECCA,

"Once more, by our carrier *pigeon*, I send you one line to tell you how dear you are—how dear you must ever be to me. The booby Dumps has no suspicion of our plot, and I have taken good care that your father

should not see me. But I cannot exist longer in this state of suspense: consent to elope with me, and I will take care to baffle pursuit. Pin your reply under the wing of our *gull*; and believe me ever your devoted

"G. A."

David did not faint: he folded his cloak more closely round him, and putting the note into his breeches' pocket, he walked deliberately to Mr. Tatum's house. Again he knocked, and again Miss Tatum was ready to receive him. He silently relinquished the cloak to the fair, or rather *unfair*, hands which had so often taken it from him, and, leaving the lady in the act of rummaging in every fold for that which he knew very well she would never find, he walked into the room, where, as usual, Mr. Tatum was sitting sipping hot toddy.

"Sir," said he, as soon as he was seated, "I have got that in my breeches' pocket which it behoves you as a father to take cognisance of."

"What do you mean?" said old Tatum.

"Look, sir," cried Dumps, throwing down the note; "read, and judge for yourself."

"What the devil does this mean?" exclaimed Tatum after reading the letter.

"It means, sir," replied David, "that every evening I have brought a note to Miss Tatum from Mr. George Arden, and as surely every evening I have carried back her reply."

"The deuse you have!" cried Tatum, starting up. "You dirty contemptible go-between! leave my house instantly, or, by Jove, I'll kick you out of it!"

David attempted expostulation; but finding it unavailing, he hurried away, snatching up the cloak, which no one now attempted to place upon his shoulders. He hurried to the pier; he paced it with rapid strides for an hour and more; and then, recollecting himself, he returned to the hotel, where he expected to find his false friend waiting to take from him the Mackintosh which had already cloaked so many interesting communica-

tions. But Miss Tatum had already found means to apprise her lover of what had passed; and on inquiring for Mr. Arden, he was told that he had retired to rest.

David, in a passion, was not to be so put off, and knowing George Arden's room, he hastened to it and knocked at the door.

"Who is there?" said Arden.

"'Tis I, sir," said David: "open the door."

"Come in the morning," replied Arden.

"I'm determined to have you out to-night, sir."

"Indeed!" said Arden, opening the door.

"Oh!" cried David sentimentally; "who would have believed it!"

"You will not waste time, if you please;—name your friend."

"Friend! never talk to me of friendship again."

"I shall not attempt to justify what I have done," said Arden: "you say you intend calling me out."

"I *have* called you out!" cried David.

"*Have* called me out?"

"Yes, sir: and now that you *are* out——" added David, bursting into tears.

"What?" said Arden.

"Why, I can only say you've behaved exceedingly disagreeably, and not at all as I expected;" and with this he left his rival to his repose.

CHAPTER IX.

OUR reader will have ascertained ere this that David was not constitutionally pugnacious: he was not, however, the less sensitive; and though he retired to his chamber and disrobed himself, he could not think of sleeping, but, putting on a large and warm *robe de chambre*, he sat down and ruminated on what had passed. David's heart (there or thereabouts,) was deeply lacerated. He had been led into a love affair, of which he never should have dreamed had not the false pair so egregiously deceived him. And yet, were they not a faithful pair? had they not loved each other long? and were they not in despair until his waterproof Mackintosh intervened to prevent their tears from utterly washing away hope? He thought of this; and not being naturally of an unforgiving disposition, it occurred to him that, ere he slept, he ought to return to Mr. Arden's apartment and exchange forgiveness with him before he slept. He took his candle, and with nothing upon him but his shirt, his slippers, and his large dressing-gown, he wandered forth to carry the olive branch. The hotel was exceedingly full; and boots or shoes were deposited on the outsides of most of the doors, ready for cleaning in the morning. On went David, and at last he reached the door of Arden's apartment. He knocked, and hearing no reply, he entered, and saw him enjoying a most comfortable repose.

"Poor fellow!" said David to himself; "he cannot have a bad conscience, or he could not sleep so sound;" and, sitting down on the bedside with his chamber-candle in his hand, he gave Arden a *nudge*.

"Who's that?" cried Arden, starting up.

"'Tis I," replied he, snivelling with emotion. "I could not sleep without coming again to say——"

"You abominable son of a grave-digger!" cried Arden, "if I catch you here again, I'll break every bone in your body:" saying which, he aimed a blow at him with the bolster, which extinguished his candle and sent him sprawling on the floor.

David did not wait for a second attack, but, rising and wrapping his gown around him, he hastily retreated; and, closing Arden's door, he found himself in one of the many passages of the crowded hotel, and in total darkness.

His first thought was how to get back to his own room as speedily as possible; and having spent some weeks in the house, he could not anticipate much difficulty in attaining that object.

He slowly but surely felt his way from passage to passage; and his heart bounded within him as he put his hand upon the lock of the door which he knew to be his own. He entered as silently as possible; and having thrown aside his dressing-gown and slippers, shivering with cold he felt his way to the bed, and turning down the clothes, he stepped in, and, snuggling himself up into the shape of the letter Z, he almost immediately fell into a doze.

But, oh! brief was its duration; for he was soon awoke by something or somebody moving in the bed, and a female voice endearingly addressed him:

"William, is that you, my dear? I didn't expect you this hour!"

"Good Lord!" cried David, as he flew out of bed, "where in the name of Heaven am I!"

"Mercy on me! it's not his voice!" cried the female in the bed; and with her two hands she tore at two bell-ropes,—one that rang *down* stairs, and one that rang *up*.

The perspiration stood on David's brow as he groped about the room; and as he stumbled over one or two things which happened to be in his way, the screams

of the female grew louder, and the bells rang more violently.

David distinctly heard the trampling of feet in the passage: lights gleamed through the crevices of the door,—it flew open, and the master of the hotel entered, accompanied by an exceedingly tall and stout gentleman.

“A man in his shirt in my lady Betty’s apartment!” said the big man; and rapidly advancing, he aimed a blow at David’s head, which took effect, and prostrated him on the floor.

“And pray what does this mean, my lady?” said the pugilistic tall man.

“How *should* I know!” cried she.

“Do you mean to say that ’twasn’t an appointment, may I ask?”

Lady Betty made no reply; but her Irish waiting-maid most volubly answered for her.

“And is it you that will insult your wife—the wife of your bosom, Mr. O’Flaney! For shame, sir! She went to her bed, and she went to her sleep, and that baste woke her getting into bed!—Oh! and she’ll never get over it!” And the maid wept and screamed, while Lady Betty O’Flaney buried her head in the bed-clothes.

“I’ll kick him down stairs!” cried Mr. O’Flaney.

“Mistook the room!” shrieked David, in the agony of his fear.

The master of the hotel, dreading that murder would be committed, now interposed, and, pacifying the Irish gentleman with assurances that every thing should be cleared up in the morning, he led David from the room.

Many of the inmates, and all of the chambermaids, were assembled in the passage to witness his egress from the scene of his discomfiture; and though he had but to pass to the next chamber, which was his own, they were none of them likely to forget him in his short white shirt, with his bleeding forehead and his long thin legs.

CHAPTER X.

WE hope none of our readers have ever been precisely in circumstances similar to those in which David was involved in our last chapter. Be that as it may, we think it probable that many, if not all, have, on waking in the morning subsequent to a night of perilous or calamitous adventure, experienced that heaviness of heart—that awful depression of spirits which make the sufferer long to take refuge once more in unconscious slumber.

David's slumbers, however, could scarcely be called unconscious: he had a perpetual nightmare, which assumed various alarming shapes. First, it was Miss Tatum smothering him and his affections with a large sheet of whitey-brown paper! Then it assumed the form of George Arden, with dark eyes and a fiend-like smile; and then it changed to fat Lady Betty O'Flaney, who, to his horror and consternation, lay down cold and motionless by his side!

But these were the visions of the night, to pass away with the darkness: nothing peculiar had happened to him—it was *all* a dream! So thought David as he turned on his pillow; but, alas! in moving he pressed upon that part of the head which had been bruised by the clenched fist of Mr. O'Flaney, and, starting up in bed, he roused himself to a thorough and humiliating consciousness of all that had passed. But this was not all:—the future,—all that might result from the occurrences of yesterday,—rose in vivid colours to his imagination. As to Becky Tatum, he did not value her a brass coffin nail; nor did the iniquity of his false friend George Arden press upon his spirit. But the husband of the lady whose couch of slumber he had so uncere-

moniously invaded! what *was* he to expect in that quarter? He shuddered as he asked himself the question, and with a sensation of sickness he lay back and buried himself in the clothes. Happy would he have been at that moment to have buried his body six feet deep in the clay of the church-yard opposite Burying-ground Buildings, Paddington Road, for he heard a loud knock at the door of his chamber.

"Come in," faintly ejaculated David.

The master of the hotel entered with a solemn look of angry and indignant reproof.

"So, sir," said he, "I hope you have sufficiently recovered from the effects of your last night's debauch to comprehend what I have to say."

"Last night's debauch!"

"Nothing but beastly intoxication *could* account for your conduct; and *nothing* could excuse it."

"Intoxication, sir! it's false."

"Then your conduct to a lady of quality was the more inexcusable: you have brought disgrace on my house, and as soon as you have paid the bill I desire you to leave it."

"Certainly," said David, flattering himself that mixt host had nothing more to say. But he did not long enjoy the delusion.

"At present, however, I come on account of Mr O'Flaney."

"Mr. who?" said David.

"The Irish gentleman whose wife's chamber you so——"

"Go on," gasped David not wishing to hear his misdeemeanours again detailed.

"Well, sir, Mr. O'Flaney has sent his friend to you."

"No—has he!" cried David, cheering up, for he was totally unacquainted with the usages of society on occasions like the present. "Where is the gentleman's friend?"

"In the coffee-room."

"Dear me!" exclaimed David, complacently putting on one of his stockings; "so he has sent his *friend* to me! Well, now, that is just the way a little mistake *ought* to be treated, and I'll talk it over in a friendly way the moment I'm dressed."

"Shall I tell the captain you will receive him?" inquired the hotel-keeper, not at all comprehending what David was talking about.

"Oh, certainly; if he's pressed for time, admit him;" and while the host descended to summon Captain Kilkenny, he arranged himself in a sedentary posture in his bed.

At all large watering-places we are sure to find plenty of amateurs of *friendship under hostile circumstances*; a "*society of 'Friends,'*" eager to be *called in* when other people are *called out*; full of fussy excitement the moment they hear of a duel, and fearful only that on account of unavoidable delay, blood may be spilt, or matters accommodated, without their agency and intervention. But Captain Kilkenny was no such man: and when applied to by his Irish friend Mr. O'Flaney to demand of David an explanation of his having so very unceremoniously availed himself of his absence to take possession of his half of the bed in which his titled lady was already slumbering in her moiety, he represented at once the improbability, under all circumstances that the invasion could have been intentional; and knowing the peaceful and unobtrusive David by sight, he now came to him fully prepared to hear the sort of explanation which the culprit was about to give.

"Mr. Dumps," said he, hardly able to keep his countenance when he beheld the melancholy object before him, "this is really a most awkward business: I am acting for my esteemed friend Mr. O'Flaney, but I trust you will look upon me as a person inclined to regard you with due consideration."

David listened in silence, and, looking at his martial figure, curled his legs up under him in the bed.

"I will avoid as far as possible any allusion to Lady

Betty, whose personal attractions may perhaps have bewildered you."

"Oh, dear me, not a bit!" replied David.

"Well, it is not for me to dictate to you the line of conduct you are to pursue. I shall expect to see your friend: it is unnecessary to mention that I am Mr. O'Flaney's friend on the occasion."

"Well, and a friend is not to be met with every day, and I quite cotton to you after what you've said. You are a good creature, I see; and if you'd just be *my* friend too, and step down to the O'Flaneys, and tell them, with my kind compliments——"

"Compliments!" exclaimed the captain, no longer able to restrain his laughter.

"Oh, don't laugh: say I mistook the room. And upon my life it's true; for as to Lady Betty and her attractions, I give you my word I never set my eyes upon her until I saw her sitting up in the bed last night."

Kilkenny, instead of checking his risibility, now leaned against the door of the apartment convulsed with laughter; and having in vain attempted to address a few intelligible words to David, he left him with the intention of explaining to his friends that he had not been guilty of any premeditated impropriety.

David was not long preparing for his public appearance, and in a state of the greatest alarm, he descended the staircase. All the house-maids were collected, and gave him knowing winks and smiles as he passed; but he only felt the more annoyed, and proceeded to the coffee-room in utter desperation.

Captain Kilkenny had already represented to his principal, David's manner of meeting the accusation.

The host and his bill were, therefore, the worst evils which he had at the moment to encounter; and having paid his way, most readily did he walk forth from the hotel and go in search of private lodgings.

CHAPTER XI.

DAVID DUMPS had scarcely left the hotel, when he was overtaken by George Arden, who rushed after him, seized his arm, and putting his handkerchief to his eyes, *seemed* to blubber like a child. The pacific David, who was at that very moment enveloped in the never-to-be-forgotten whitey-brown Mackintosh, endeavoured to shake him off, saying, "Sir, I've found you out; I want no more acquaintance with you."

"I know," sobbed George,—*"I know too well the shameful duplicity of my conduct. But having behaved unkindly to you, I am more anxious to snatch you from the fatal and fathomless gulf which is now yawning at your feet."*

David started back three paces, looked at the ground, took a long breath and said,

"Sir, there's no gulf whatsoever at my feet: and if there were, it's my belief you'd give me a push to send me forward, rather than pull at my skirts to save me."

"It is natural you should think so: but, nevertheless, listen to me, and follow my advice."

"Well, let me hear," said David.

"They are thirsting for your blood at the hotel."

"Don't say so! Who do you mean?"

"The Irish husband of that much-injured lady."

"Much-injured lady!——"

"Don't interrupt me. Mr. O'Flaney is determined to have a shot at you; and Captain Kilkenny——"

"Don't mention Captain Kilkenny!" said David, shuddering and looking anxiously around.

"There is a way to save you yet."

"Name it."

"Come at once with *me* to the Column (the Boulogne

Chalk Farm :) we have been already suiters to the same lady, and I have pistols in my pocket."

"And what the devil difference does it make to me, whether I am shot at by you, or by them Irishmen?"

"One material difference," said Arden: "my pistols are loaded only with powder."

"A great advantage, certainly," replied Dumps.— "Well, then, let me consider. You mean to say, if I fight, or *seem* to fight a duel with you, you think I sha'n't have to meet the others in earnest?"

"Of course not."

"Oh, well: but then what is *your* object?"

"*You'll* be my object presently, of course."

"Nonsense! don't jest," said David. "Why do *you* take all this trouble? for I know you would not do it if you had not some end to gain."

"Reparation for the injuries I have already inflicted on you."

"Indeed!" said Dumps, in an incredulous tone.

"Yes, believe me," replied George. "But come, we have still some way to go." And he hurried his passive companion up a little romantic path which leads from the end of the Rue du Canal Tautilleries, towards the Column; a charming walk in summer, when the grass is green, and a bright rapid rill as clear as crystal bounds along close to your feet. But David noticed none of its beauties, as he hurried on in obedience to Mr. Arden. At length they reached some open ground close to the beautiful Column, which was commenced by Napoleon, when his troops were in arms on the heights, and the sea below was covered by the British fleet.

"Now," said Arden, looking round on every side, "we are arrived at the proper place: but as we have no seconds, we must avoid killing one another, as it might be misinterpreted murder."

"What horrid thoughts you have!" cried David.

"There, stand you there," said Arden, "and I will now take my position;" and he deliberately walked away.

"I see people coming this way," said David.

"I expected as much," replied Arden, coolly. "Two families at least are ere this aware of our hostile meeting, and some one will doubtless arrive in time to carry away the body."

"The body!" exclaimed David, dropping the pistol which Arden had placed in his hands.

"To be sure: what can *they* expect but *one* body, or *more*?"

"Well; but you're quite sure——"

"Hush!" exclaimed Arden; "there's no time to be lost: you fire at *me* first."

"Fire first!" said David, to whom killing a man was almost equivalent to being killed. "Are you perfectly certain that there is no danger—no bullet, no shot, nothing but powder?"

"Fire!" said Arden, solemnly: "and remember, if you do not accede to this bloodless encounter, you will be fired at in earnest by Mr. O'Flaney."

"Good gracious!" said David, trembling all over; "how do you do it? I suppose I'm to pull the trigger. Mercy on me! I'm going to pull—look another way!"

The pistol went off. David staggered back several paces: he heard a loud shrill scream; he looked towards the spot where George Arden had so lately stood in the bloom of health and beauty;—Heavens! could he believe his eyes! his opponent lay covered with blood, and supported in the arms of Rebecca Tatum, who uttered loud and piercing cries. David, more dead than alive, ran towards them, and falling on his knees, assisted in raising the fallen youth. At that moment Captain Kilkenny galloped to the spot, his horse in a foam, and himself in a fearful state of excitement.

"How is this!" said he; "a duel, without seconds! Rash men, why did you not confide in me?—How are you, sir?"

"Life is ebbing fast," said Arden, faintly.

"Oh!" cried Rebecca, "kill the murderer!"

"*That means me!*" exclaimed David, with a voice of anguish.

"Save him," said Arden: "he has behaved like a man—nobly, bravely. Two shots had we already exchanged; he never flinched. Oh, sir, if you are a man of honour, save him!"

"A man of honour!" exclaimed Kilkenny: "do you mean to doubt it?"

Arden pointed to the crimson tide which now literally overflowed his garments.

"True," said Kilkenny; "you're in no condition to eat your words, nor any thing else: you wish me to save this person; and you say he has behaved bravely."

"An Alexander, an Agamemnon!" said Arden.

"Well, I think I *do* know a way to save him: for I've a friend at anchor in the offing in his yacht; and if I can get him on board, all will be well. But then, if I go with him, what will become of you?"

"I feel somewhat revived," murmured Arden, after taking a sup out of a little brandy-bottle; "and living or dying I am happy with this lady."

"Oh, yes, I see," said Kilkenny, as Arden threw himself into the arms of his too willing Becky. "And now, you, sir, get up behind me."

He jumped upon his prancing steed; and when seated, he leaned down, and seizing David by the collar, he soon placed him on the horse behind him; and away they went, regardless of road or path, towards the sands; David, in his unaccustomed position, suffering very severe bodily pain, and yet now and then venturing to turn his head towards the fatal field, where he could still distinguish the bleeding body of Arden, supported by the fragile frame of the susceptible Rebecca.

CHAPTER XII.

It was no easy matter to convey Mr. Dumps under existing circumstances from the shores of France to the deck of the yacht *Waterwagtail*; but Captain Kilkenny was full of expedients; and, before evening, David, enveloped in his Mackintosh, was tossing about in an open boat, and in due course of time was hoisted into the larger and safer vessel.

Captain Kilkenny had not thought it necessary to enlighten Mr. Cockle, the owner of the yacht, respecting David's adventures and difficulties: he merely introduced him as a gentleman in a bad state of health, who was recommended a cruise;—and certainly he looked sufficiently ill to verify the captain's words.

Somebody has somewhere very sensibly remarked, "that men are never ridiculous for not possessing any particular accomplishment: it is the endeavour to *seem* what they are not which justly exposes them to ridicule." No one ever learned from experience the truth of this axiom more thoroughly than Mr. Cockle.

His father was a respectable professional gentleman, who resided in an inland county; and being a younger son, his allowance was small, and his expectations not great. It so happened, however, that he was fortunate enough to win the affections of a young lady of very large fortune. She was of age and under no control; they were very shortly married, and, after the customary elegant *déjeûné à la fourchette*, they sat off in a travelling-carriage and four, to spend their honeymoon at Brighton.

Mrs. Cockle had been educated at a fashionable boarding-school near the metropolis, and she had acquired

notions of fashion and style that were perfectly astonishing to her less sophisticated husband.

When the residents of an inland county first look upon the sea, the event becomes an era in their existence. Beautiful was the day of their arrival in Brighton: the vast deep lay before them, radiant with sunbeams, and so calm that the pretty little pleasure-boats seemed to slumber in its bosom.

Said Mrs. Cockle to her spouse one day, "My dear, I love the sea: let us take a marine mansion."

"Certainly," said Mr. Cockle: "whatever you wish, my love."

"And," added the bride, "you must become a member of the Yacht Club: there's nothing so stylish as a yacht."

When a wife who has enriched a husband proposes agreeable ways of spending her own money, where is the man who could refuse her? Cockle had seldom put his foot in a boat, and therefore could not flatter himself that he was quite fit to undertake the management of a large vessel. "But," thought he, "the sea looks a mighty agreeable sunshiny place, and by the end of the season I dare say I shall be as good and practical a seaman as any in the club."

So from Brighton they proceeded to Portsmouth, and from Portsmouth to Cowes, the head-quarters of the association of amateur nautical noblemen and gentlemen.

Mrs. Cockle had a cousin, a Mr. Lorimer Lomax, an exquisite of a certain age. He was charmed to hear of Cockle's sea-faring propensities, readily offered to introduce him to the commodore, and declared that a very excellent first-rate yacht was to be sold, the property of a young gentleman who could no longer contrive to keep it (or himself) afloat.

Mr. Cockle's arrangements were soon made; he became master and commander of the cutter "Waterwagtail," of three hundred tons burden, and he made his appearance on the parade in a straw hat, a blue

shirt, large rough blue trousers, and a sailor's ornamented with the button of the club.

On entering on a new pursuit, he would have liked to come down calmly and gradually into the habits to which he had hitherto been unaccustomed: he would have liked to feel his way, as it were, like a cat on a mat, or, put out first one paw, and then the other, ere rashly ventured from dry land. He would have liked remaining at anchor for the first month or so; indeed, had it been possible to draw up the "Water-lark" high and dry upon the beach, he would have liked that a satisfactory arrangement. But friends were always injudicious, and he had unfortunately *enlisted* at an unlucky moment. The whole squadron was on the point of departure for Cherbourg, and Cockle was gratified on having joined them when an opportunity offered for at once enjoying a delightful voyage, visiting a French port, and looking at a French king and the royal family. A little qualm came over Cockle as he listened to the enumeration of all these pleasures and joys: but Mrs. Cockle was in an ecstasy, and besides, Mr. Lorimer Lomax, kindly offered to accompany them. They were to put to sea the next day, and were therefore in no small bustle making prepara-

As dawn was overcast, the morning lowered; when Mr. Cockle looked out of his window, and saw the clouds and heard the wind whistle, he at once perceived that there could be no embarkation that day. He was no longer his own master; every body but himself seemed to exult in what they were pleased to call the fairness of the wind: "to him it sounded very odd when he looked at the sea and saw a quantity of landsmen call "*white horses*," he felt as if somebody had disagreed with him, and said in a tone of objection to a "*brother sailor*" who stood near, "Of course we shall not sail to-day?" "We shall sail!" he replied: "to be sure we shall; this is the very breeze we wanted."

It was now too late to retreat. He had heard something about orders from the commodore about the time and order of sailing, and the exact place allotted to the "Waterwagtail;" but of all this he knew nothing; his people on board had the management of the vessel—and unfortunately of himself also, and now came the moment for going on board.

It really blew hard, not in Cockle's estimation alone, for it had done that all day; but the people about him cast ominous looks at the skies, and seemed to his nervously excited imagination to consider them doomed creatures. When they got to the steps in front of the club-house, they found the little boat which was to convey them to "the Waterwagtail" tossing about like a mad thing—now up, now down, and the water splashing over her.

"It's a tempting of Providence to think of getting into her," said Cockle; and his wife, clinging to his arm, said, "Had we not better go back?"

But Mr. Lorimer Lomax, though no sailor himself, seemed desperately bent on destruction to all the family. He and the boatmen hurried them into the boat, and enveloped them in cloaks. Away they went; the shore receded, and the happy people walking on the promenade grew less and less; and Cockle longed to tread the deck of his newly-purchased yacht, thinking that of two evils the big ship would be better than the diminutive punt. They got into fearfully rough water; a strong current of the tide met the wind—so somebody said, and the meeting seemed to be any thing but amicable. Mrs. Cockle screamed and leaned on her husband on one side; and on the other, Mr. Lomax pinched his arm black and blue.

"Luff, luff!" said the man who steered the boat; and thinking that he looked at him, and that very probably their safety depended on his instantly doing some incomprehensible thing, Cockle shouted in reply,

"In the name of Heaven, what *do* you mean by

‘luff?’ Mary, my dear, luff, if you please: Lomax, do luff, if you happen to know how.”

The steersman gave a grim smile, and addressing Mrs. Cockle, said, “Trim the boat, if you please, ma’am.”

“Mary,” ejaculated Cockle, “the man speaks to you.”

“What is it?” inquired she.

“Trim the boat, ma’am.”

“Mercy on us! she don’t know how,” said Cockle.

“He talks as coolly as if he wanted her to trim a bonnet!”

“Sit,—there,” said the sailor, pointing to a place.

And, thankful that at last he spoke intelligibly, Cockle took Mrs. C. by the shoulders and placed her in the identical spot.

“There’s your yacht,” said the sailor: “they’ll soon bear down upon us.”

“*Down upon us!*” cried Cockle, looking at the great black body that came nearer and nearer every moment. “Oh, how shocking to be run over by one’s own ‘Waterwagtail!’”

A rope was thrown to them which hit Cockle in the right eye and blinded him; the boat bumped against the side of the yacht, and he lay prostrate on the flat of his back. His wife fainted, and was borne up in a state of insensibility; and he followed, holding two slippery ropes, and with difficulty keeping his feet upon what he was afterwards told was the accommodation ladder:—a pretty *accommodation* truly!

He stood upon his own deck, he leaned against his own mast, and his own sailors pushed him about and seemed to consider him in the way. His legs lost all strength; he sank upon a seat; his head dangled over the side of the vessel;—he was sea-sick! All fears left him, and with them all natural affections. He cared not three straws about his inestimable wife; he cared not for his guest, her cousin; he gave no orders, he knew nothing that was going on. He was conscious that the weather was getting worse and worse; but he

was getting worse and worse himself,—and what is weather to a dying man?

He knew nothing about the commodore, nothing about the squadron. All night he lay on his berth in the cabin, opposite to his wife, who lay upon hers; and, their beds being on something like shelves let into the wall, he thought of bodies in a mausoleum.

One lamp suspended from the ceiling cast on them a melancholy light. Oh! how it swung to and fro!—and the chairs, how they tumbled about! And the horrid clamour of shouting men, and flapping sails, and creaking masts, and howling winds, and rushing waters!

Now don't laugh at us, dear, inestimable Captain Marryat, should you ever be tempted to skim these pages: we know nothing about the ocean and the big ships; and for that very reason have we for once ventured into deep water. We, as landsmen, have yachted, and have suffered; and we just venture to tell of that which we have seen. Verily we are indebted to you for many a hearty laugh, and many an hour's amusement; and, in place or out of place, we venture to offer you our little note of admiration.

One of the sailors came down into the cabin occasionally, and gave Mr. Cockle brandy, which he passively swallowed: and then brandy was given to Mrs. Cockle; and *he* had just sense enough left to observe that *she* drank it passively too.

"Is there any hope?" once said Cockle.

"Hope, sir! what d'ye mean by hope?"

"Ah! you may well say that!"

There was a pause; and then Cockle added,

"I trust we're near land?"

"We must keep clear of land: land is the worst place we could see on such a night as this."

How people may be mistaken! Land was what Cockle had been longing for!

"Could we not go on shore?" he inquired.

"If we don't keep a good look-out, we *shall* go on shore," said the sailor.

Well?" asked Cockle.

And in ten minutes the Waterwagtail would go to
s, and every soul on board perish."

Cockle groaned, and so did Mrs. C.; and they heard
pensive groan from Lorimer Lomax, whose body
been *laid out* in a sort of closet which served many
oses.

e will no longer dwell upon their present situation.

: beating about for two days and two nights, the

continued strong against them, and at Cockle's

est entreaty, rather than in obedience to his com-

d, they made Boulogne harbour, where they re-

ed four-and-twenty hours; and then, the weather

ng tranquillised a little, they put to sea again, and,

ng picked up Mr. Dumps in the offing, the Water-

tail proceeded on her course towards Cherbourg.

CHAPTER XIII.

DAILY experience proves that sea-sickness, however distressing it may be for the time to the poor body, leaves little or no impression on the mind. People go on shore, and eat and drink, and enjoy themselves; and then, forgetting all they suffered on board the vessel, they go voluntarily and put their feet in it again. Thus it was with Mr. and Mrs. Cockle, and Mr. Lorimer Lomax: a few hours on land had driven from their recollection the ups and downs of a seafaring life; and though when poor David was picked up from his open boat in a state almost reaching death, Mr. and Mrs. Cockle were already beginning to feel odd, Mr. Lomax's health seemed entirely re-established, and he was able to do the honours of the Waterwagtail, and give the new-comer a civil reception.

David both in body and mind seemed to suffer a total prostration of strength; he looked wildly round him, spoke incoherently, and then, clasping his hands, fixed his eyes with a ghastly glare on the shores from which they were rapidly moving.

When they got beyond the shelter of the high land they found that the winds had by no means retired their coral caves, nor to any of the other places peculiarly mentioned as their residences; and the party very soon descended to the cabin.

"If the wind continues as it is," said the steward, who came down to attend to some of their little comforts, and obtained from Lomax the nick-name of Og, the King of Basin, "we shall not make Cherbourg to-morrow."

"Make Cherbourg!" ejaculated Mrs. Cockle; "what

can he mean by making it! If there was no such place till I helped to make it, you'd never see it at all."

"Be quiet good people," said Lorimer Lomax.

"Now do for goodness' sake let us while away the time: if you do not make an effort, you'll be as bad as ever. There's Mr. Dumps now betrays—"

"Betrays!" said David, turning paler than before; "hey?—what?—I said nothing!"

"No, in truth," replied Lomax, almost startled by his manner; "but you do nevertheless betray symptoms of illness. The blood—"

"Blood!" murmured David, hastily glancing at his hands.

"The blood has left your cheeks," proceeded Lomax, "and your best weapon against the enemy—nay, don't stare so!—your best weapon, I say, will be a little glass of brandy!"

"Give it me," said David; "I do indeed require it!" and he grasped the proffered cordial with a trembling hand.

Mr. Lorimer Lomax, though no longer young, still retained the *remains* of much appertaining to life's spring time. He had the remains of a good figure, a good face, and good spirits, and also the remains of an exceedingly pleasing voice. At fifty or thereabouts he still suspended his guitar by a pink silk riband over his shoulder, and he still found young and pretty girls ready to listen to his songs and their accompaniment. Unfortunately there were no pretty girls on board the Waterwagtail; but Lorimer produced his guitar, and, glancing round at his small but select audience, (as they always say at a count-house, where there are not enough people present to pay for the candles,) he struck a few chords, and said,

"Well, good people, what will you have? the song of a gay troubadour, or one about love and murder?"

"Murder!" almost shrieked David.

"Love and murder, if you please," said Mrs. Cockle from her sofa; and with a peculiar sort of twang-lango-

dillo accompaniment, the minstrel of the Waterwagtail sang the following ballad.

THE TRYSTING TIME.

She was watching from her casement—she had watch'd since dawn of day ;

'Twas not the hour appointed, yet she blamed him for delay !
Her gay disguise, her mask and cloak, were lying by her side ;
Impatiently she breathed his name, and wept when none replied ;
And then she vow'd that he in turn should watch and wait for her,—
For when she heard the signal-word, she would not deign to stir.

II.

'Twas the long-expected signal ! Oh ! she knew he'd come at last !
She gave a ready answer, for her angry mood was past ;
And, glancing at her toilet-glass, she paused a moment there,
To re-arrange her silken robe and deck her flowing hair ;
She gaily sang the melody that was her lover's choice :
How happy was that maiden's heart,—how merry was her voice !

III.

Alas ! 'twas not by *her* alone that signal had been heard ;—
The lover's rival, lurking there, had caught the whisper'd word ;
And bloody was his dagger's point as from the scene he rush'd,—
And cold and pale the lover lay—the voice of Love was hush'd !
And, all unconscious of her doom, came forth his plighted bride :—
None saw her shed a tear—at morn the dead lay side by side !*

There was a pause, and then a deep groan from Dumps attracted all eyes towards him.

"The dead lay side by side !" said he, shuddering as he made the quotation.

"There is no such love now-a-days," murmured Mrs. Cockle from her place of horizontal refreshment.

"I don't know that," replied her husband : "There are disappointed rivals, still, who would be ready enough to take the life-blood of the man who—"

David rose up in his seat, as if to speak ; but his lips moved without producing any sound, and he sank down again.

* This ballad is about to be published at Mr. Falkener's, with music by Mr. Knight.

"Had I ever killed a man," said Lorimer, "I should expect to see him in every dark corner."

"No! should you though?" gasped David.

"Yes, in this cabin now, as we sit by the nominal light of that swinging lamp. Look round you: can you not imagine spectre forms, eyeless sockets, yawning lipless mouths——"

"Where?"

"Here, there, every where!" said Lomax, pointing in turn to different recesses, while David's eyes followed the movements of his finger.

David sighed deeply.

"But supposing," said Lomax, "that our hands were stained with blood,—that we had sent a fellow-creature to his last account!"

"His last account!"

"Ay, what would be our feelings then?"

"His last account!" again ejaculated David; turning up the whites of his eyes.

"Why it's to be hoped so: you would not have a murdered man come back again?"

"Not for the universe!"

"No, to be sure not; nor any other dead man. Nobody is long missed; and when once our place on earth has been filled up, had we the power to return——"

"What then?" said Mrs. Cockle, who felt as if she was not long for this world.

"Why, then, finding that we had no place at all, either in the home we called ours, or in the hearts of those we loved, we should soon voluntarily go and lay ourselves down again in the grave where we have been so soon forgotten!"

"Lord! how melancholy!" said Cockle.

"I will give you a more cheerful view of the same picture," said Lomax; and taking a little manuscript book from a desk near him, he added, "Having sung you a song, I will now read you a story."

THE POST MORTEM COGITATIONS OF THE LATE POPULAR
MR. SMITH.

"I died on the first of April 1823.

"Go to the parish church of Smithton, ask the sexton for the key, and having gained admission, walk up the left-hand side aisle, and you will perceive my family pew, beneath which is my family vault, where my mortal remains are now reposing; and against the wall over the very spot where I used to sit every Sunday, you will see a white marble monument: a female figure is represented in an attitude of despair, weeping over an urn; and on that urn is the following inscription:—

"Sacred
To the memory of
ANTHONY SMITH,
of Smithton Hall,
Who departed this life
On the 1st of April 1823,
Aged 40.

The integrity of his conduct and the amiability of his temper
endeared him
to a wide circle of friends.
He has left an inconsolable Widow,
and by her
This Monument is erected.

"This inscription may give you a faint idea of my position when alive. Popularity had always been my aim, and my wealth and situation in society enabled me to attain what I so ardently desired. At county meetings, at the head of my own table, among the poor of the parish, I was decidedly popular, and the name of Smith was always breathed with a blessing or a commendation. My wife adored me: no wonder, therefore, that at my demise she erected a monument to my memory, and designated herself, in all the lasting durability of marble, my 'inconsolable widow.' Nothing could exceed my amiability: Mrs. Smith said—and she said it with all heart, and she might well say it too, that there never was such a husband. My life was one smile, my sayings were conciliatory, my doings benevolent, my

questions endearing, my answers affirmative. I silently studied the wants and wishes of those around me, and endeavoured to arrange my leavings so that each legatee should hereafter bless that 'dear good fellow Smith,' always at the same time having recourse to a pocket-handkerchief. I perpetually sat for my picture, and gave my resemblances to all the dear friends who were hereafter to receive the 'benefit of my dying.'

"So far I have confined my narrative to the humdrum probabilities of every day life. What I have now to relate may seem less probable; but it is not one jot the less true. I was anxious not only to attain a degree of popularity that should survive my brief existence; I panted to witness that popularity,—unseen to see the tears that would be shed,—upheard to mingle with the mute mourners who would lament my death. But *how* was this privilege to be attained? Alas! attained it was; but, for the sake of others, never will I reveal the means. I wanted to watch my own weepers, nod at my own plumes, count my own mourning coaches; and read with my own eyes the laudatory paragraph that announced my demise in the county newspapers. What devilish arts I used, what spells, what incantations, never will I make known: suffice it to say that I attained the object of my desires. Two **PEEPS** was I to have at those I left behind me; *one* exactly a month after my demise, the *second* on that day ten years.

"And now for the result of peep the first; for I will begin the most satisfactory part of my own 'post mortem examination.'

"My own house (or rather the house that had been mine) looked miserable enough,—the servants in deep mourning, and a hatchment over the door. My wife (my widow I mean,) was a perfect picture of weeds, in the extreme of the fashion. She heaved the deepest sighs; she was trimmed with the deepest crape, and she wore the deepest hems. The accumulated depth of her despondency was truly gratifying. In her right hand was a cambric handkerchief, in her left hand a smelling-bottle, and in her eye a tear.

"She was closeted with a man; but it was no rival. It was in fact a *marble masonic meeting*. She was giving directions about my monument, and putting herself into the attitude of lamentation in which she wished to be represented, (and is represented,) bending over my urn. She shed a torrent of tears, and said something about her 'sainted Anthony.' Our common breakfast urn, which had acted the part of a funeral one, was now removed, and my widow looking over the estimate, grumbled at the expense! knocking off here and there some little ornamental monumental decoration, bargaining about my inscription, and cheapening my tombstone.

"She was interrupted by the entrance of a milliner, who was ordered to prepare a black velvet cloak, lined and trimmed with ermine. 'Alas!' thought I, 'the widow's "inky cloak" may well be warm; my marble covering will be cold comfort to her.'

"A housemaid was blubbering on the stairs, a footman sighing in the hall. Happy late husband that I was; surely I caused this grief: and when I heard that a temporary reduction in the establishment had been determined on, and that the weeping and sighing individuals had just been discharged, I felt the soothing conviction that leaving their living mistress tore open the wounds inflicted by the loss of their late master.

"My dog howled as I passed him, my horse ran wild in the paddock, and the clock in my own sitting-room maintained a sad and solemn silence, waiting my hand to wind it up.

"Things evidently did not go in the old routine without me; and this was soothing to my spirit. My own portrait was turned with its face to the wall. 'What, after all,' thought I, 'is the use of a portrait? When the original lives, we have something better to look at; and when the original is gone, we turn it wrong side outwards!'

"On the village green the little boys played cricket. What of that? a boy will skip after his grandmother's funeral. On a dead wall I read, '*Smith for ever*.'—'For ever!' thought I; 'that is a long time to talk about!'

Close to it, I saw 'Muggins for ever;' the letters equally large, and much more fresh. Muggins was my parliamentary successor, and his politics were the same as my own: this was cheering; my constituents had not deserted my principles,—what more could I expect? The 'SMITH' who they said was to be their representative 'FOR EVER,' was now just as dead as the wall on which his name was chalked!

"Again I retired to my resting-place under the family pew in the church of Smithton, quite satisfied that at the expiration of ten years I should take my *second peep* at equally gratifying, though perhaps rather softened evidences of my unabated popularity.

"The ten years of my sepulchral slumber passed away, and the day arrived for my *second and last peep* at my disconsolate widow, and wide circle of affectionate friends.

"The monument opened 'its ponderous and marble jaws,' and invisibly I glided to the gates of my own domain. The old lodge had been pulled down; and a cottage gone mad, all thatch and creepers, had been erected in its place. I could not find my way to my own house! the road had been turned, old trees cut down, new plantations made, ponds filled up, lakes dug; my own little 'Temple to Friendship' was not to be found, but a temple dedicated to the blind god been erected in a conspicuous situation. 'Ah!' thought I, 'her love is a buried love! to me, her "sainted Anthony," this templed has been dedicated.'

"So entirely was the park metamorphosed, that I did not arrive at the mansion until the hour of dinner. There was a bustle at the hall-door; servants in gay liveries, carriages, lights! a dinner-party! Well, doubtless my widow, still in the sober gray of ameliorated mourning, had summoned round her the best and dearest of my friends.

"Unseen I walked into the dining-room. I cast my eyes round the table.—Oh, what bliss was mine! at the head sat my widowed wife, all smiles, loveliness, pink

silk, and flowers; not so young as, when I last beheld her, but very handsome, and considerably fatter.

"At the foot—(oh, what a *touching* compliment to *me*!)—sat one of my oldest friends, Mr. Muggins. He did the honours well, (though he omitted to drink to my memory!) and the only thing that occurred to startle me before the removal of dinner was my widow's calling him 'my dear.'

"When the dessert had been arranged on the table, she called to one of the servants, saying, 'John, tell Mary to bring the children.'

"What could she mean! who was Mary, and what children did she wish to be brought! *I never had* any children. Presently the door flew open, and in ran eight noisy, healthy, beautiful brats! The younger ones congregated round the hostess; but the two eldest, both ~~fine~~ boys ran to Mr. Muggins, and each took possession of a knee! What was my astonishment when he said, *addressing my widow*, 'My dear love, may I give them some orange?'

"But the mystery was soon explained. Sir Marmaduke Muggins filled his glass, and said to his son, 'This is your birth-day, Jack; here's your health, my boy, and may you and your Caroline long live happy together! Come, my friends, the health of MR. AND MRS. MUGGINS.'

"So then, after all, I had come out on an exceedingly cold day to see my widow doing the honours as Mrs. Muggins!

"'When is *your* birth-day?' said Sir Marmaduke to his daughter-in-law.

"'In June,' she replied: 'but I have not been in the habit to keep birth-days till lately. Poor Smith could not endure birth-days to be kept.'

"'What's that about poor Smith?' said the successor to my house, my wife, and my other appurtenances. 'Do you say Smith could not bear birth-days? Very silly that: but *poor* Smith had his oddities.'

"'Oddities!' said a dear old friend of mine, smiling and pointing to his head. 'Yes, yes,—to say the *least* of it, he *had* his oddities.'

"‘Oh!’ said *my widow*, and *Mr. Muggins’ wife*, ‘we cannot *always* command perfection. Poor dear Mr. Smith *meant* well; but every man cannot be a *Muggins*.’ She smiled and nodded down the table; Mr. Muggins looked pleased, as well he might, and then the ladies left the room.

"‘Talking of Smith,’ said Sir Marmaduke, ‘what wretched taste he had, poor man! This place was quite thrown away upon him; he had no idea of its capabilities.’

"‘No,’ replied a gentleman to whom I had bequeathed a legacy; ‘with the best intentions in the world, Smith was really a *very* odd man.’

"‘His house,’ added another, who was my frequent guest, ‘was never agreeable: it was not his *fault*, poor fellow.’

"‘No, no,’ said a *very* great crony of mine: ‘he did every thing for the best; but, between ourselves, Smith *was* a bore.’

"‘Indeed, considering his oddities,’ said the man who before pointed to his head, ‘it was a fortunate thing he died when he did. There was something wrong *here* in his family:’ and he pointed to his head again.

"‘It is well,’ said Mr. Muggins, ‘that talking of him has not the effect which is attributed to talking of another invisible personage. Let him rest in peace: for if it were possible that he could be reanimated, his re-appearance here to claim his goods and chattels, and above all, his wife, would be attended with rather awkward consequences.’

"So much for my posthumous curiosity! Vain mortal that I was, to suppose that after a dreamless sleep of ten long years, I could return to the land of the living, and find the place and the hearts that I once filled still unoccupied! In the very handsome frame of my own picture was now placed a portrait of John Muggins, Esq.: mine was thrown aside in an old lumber-room, where the sportive children of my widow had recently discovered it, and with their mimic swords had innocently

poked out the eyes of what they had been pleased to denominate '*the dirty picture of the ugly old man!*'

"My presumption has been properly rewarded: let no one who is called to his last account wish, like me, to revisit earth. If such a wish were granted, and, like me, he returned invisibly, all that he would hear and see would wound his spirit; and were he to return *visibly in propria persona*, mortifying indeed would be his reception.

"I came not from my family vault to read a sermon or a lecture; and yet, '*the post mortem cogitations of the late popular Mr. Smith*, are not without a moral!'"

"Good gracious me!" cried Dumps when Lomax had finished his story; "now do tell me, is all that strictly true?"

"Strictly true, sir!" replied Lomax, assuming a mock air of defiance. "Pray, may I ask what would your friend Captain Kilkenny have said to you, had you doubted for an instant *his* veracity?"

"Don't mention it," said David: "I believe it all."

"By-the-by, as I see our excellent friends are now in a calm slumber, my story having acted as an opiate, may I ask to what *peculiar* circumstances the captain alluded when he entreated us to take you on board?"

"He did *not* tell you all, then?"

"He told us nothing, except that you had innocently involved yourself in a dilemma which rendered a speedy departure desirable."

"Innocently!" exclaimed David, with a shudder.

"I take it for granted, there was a lady in the case?" inquired Lomax.

"A lady, sir?—*two* ladies, sir!" murmured David.

"Two! You are a bold man. And there was a rival, of course?"

"There *was* a rival, certainly!"

"Not waylaid and murdered, like the lover in my song, I hope?"

David looked piteously, but made no reply.

He slept not that night: when he closed his eyes, the bloody form of George Arden lay before him, supported

by the frantic Rebecca. David had "murdered sleep," and he expected to "sleep no more."

True it was that Arden had himself placed the pistol in his hand, and had given him the signal to fire; equally true that he had no notion the pistol was loaded with any deadly missile. Consolatory considerations these: but then, again, what could reconcile him to the idea of having in cold blood killed a fellow-creature,—a youth in the fulness of his bloom, and with "all his imperfections on his head?" Blood was on his hands; and were he that night to go to a certain place called "Davy Jones's locker," he knew full well that the vast ocean—nay, "all the perfumes of Arabia, would not sweeten" those large fists.

All night he watched the monotonous swinging of the lamp, and listened to the din of many noises. The next morning he heard guns firing and people huzzaing, and was informed that, the weather having abated, they had ventured nearer the French coast, and were actually off Cherbourg. But so slow had been their progress, that they had arrived only just in time to be too late: the royal family had just left the town, and the members of the yacht club were preparing to set sail to the Isle of Wight. The crew of the Waterwagtail saw in fact on landing nothing but a French town involved in that extreme state of dulness which invariably follows a period of unusual gayety and excitement.

Mr. and Mrs. Cockle had learned a lesson which they were neither of them likely to forget. A party of pleasure is proverbially a painful undertaking; but its annoyances are generally petty ones,—an *al fresco déjeûné* under an umbrella, or a July day passed with five or six people in a *closed* landau. Such dilemmas are farcical; but the pleasuring of the crew of the Waterwagtail might have ended in a *deep* tragedy.

Let it be a warning to all landsmen whose minds are bent upon salt-water excursions. 'Tis rash for children to play with edge-tools; but it is ten times more rash for land-lubbers to try to make a plaything of a vessel in a gale of wind.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. and Mrs. Cockle, with Mr. Lorimer Lomax, having refreshed and refitted, again entered the Waterwagtail, leaving Mr. Dumps, who repaired to the English consul to obtain a passport to pursue his journey by land. A passenger by an English gentleman's yacht, sick of the sea, soon obtained the requisite document; for he wisely said not one word about Boulogne, leaving the worthy functionary to suppose that he had started from England with Mr. Cockle. From Cherbourg he departed by the diligence, with no fixed plan save a determination to avoid Boulogne-sur-Mer.

He rambled far and wide, to the right and to the left, visiting Havre, Rouen, Dieppe, and Amiens; and then, finding that his direct route to England lay through the dreaded seaport, he again diverged and proceeded to Arras, which is a very fine old fortified town, and thronged with military.

David put up at the Hôtel de l'Europe, and, being rather indisposed, he remained there for some days without meeting an individual who even attempted to speak a word of English,—not very cheering to a man of a serious turn of mind: and now, unfortunately, he felt

“Never ~~less~~ alone than when alone;”

for the bleeding body of George Arden invariably filled the vacant chair next to him, or occupied the path he had chosen for his ramble a few paces in advance of him.

Arras became no longer endurable; so he determined to change the scene and proceed to Lille. He found himself the sole occupant of the *coupé* of the diligence: but by his side sat his ever-present imaginary compa-

nion; and the screams of Rebecca rang in his ears, mingled with the unintelligible chat of the people who occupied the *intérieure*.

Suddenly the diligence stopped, and two *gensdarmes* rode up and spoke loudly to the *conducteur*. After examining a paper, poor David was pointed out to their notice; and they immediately rode to the two doors of the *coupé*, one looking in at each window, and both talking in the unknown tongue to the amazed and panic-struck occupant.

David could not understand one word they said; and when the *conducteur* and some of the passengers from the *intérieure* joined the party and attempted to explain, they added to the clamour, without conveying any intelligence to the solitary Englishman. At length, as is usually the case in such emergencies, the principal performers resorted to pantomime: they took him from his private box, and when he was upon his feet in the muddy road, they pointed to a led-horse, intimating by expressive action that he must mount thereon, and pointing vehemently back the way they came.

Now David began a little by-play of his own: he opened his eyes wide, and shook his head, to express astonishment at their conduct, and ignorance of its cause; he felt in all his pockets for his passport, and shook his head again when he could not find it; he put his right hand on his left side, where he had been told his heart was, to express innocence, and he made a low bow, to intimate his respect for the gentlemen in the large cocked hats, at the same time putting his right foot on the step, preparatory to taking the seat from which he had been so unceremoniously dislodged. But at that moment a horrible recollection came over him, a remembrance of his crime,—murder! What *but* murder could cause the government to send out soldiers armed and mounted to scour the country in pursuit of an humble individual like himself. Alas! no more was his right hand pressed upon his heart, no more was his right leg lifted to the step; he clasped his hands, raised them in the air,

shook them vehemently, and, going towards the horse, he intimated his readiness to yield to the commands of those who had arrested his progress. The *conducteur* mounted to his usual elevated situation; the other passengers, all talking together, entered the *intérieure*, and the diligence drove off towards Lille; and then David was assisted into his saddle, and, being placed between the two *gensdarmes*, all three trotted off towards Arras.

Trotting off is, unfortunately, the most appropriate expression we could use, for in the accomplishment of riding on horseback David's education had been sadly neglected; and being now extemporaneously mounted on a high trotting war-horse, he bounded about, now this way, now that—now on the crupper, and now approximating towards the animal's tail, until, no longer able to remain where he was, he slipped off on the left side, and very narrowly escaped being trampled on by the steed of his companion. Though severely bruised, he was again obliged to ascend to his saddle; and after suffering martyrdom, and enduring for upwards of two hours the ridicule of the Frenchmen, whose pantomime was now perfectly intelligible, he arrived at the town which he had so recently left, and instead of again occupying his apartment in the *Hôtel de l'Europe*, he was provided with a little room elsewhere, the door of which was carefully locked on the outside.

David had a miserable time of it; haunted by the ghost of the man he had murdered, and visited by none but grim-looking men, with whose language he was utterly unacquainted. He was carried before a large dark dignitary, who was seated with several other important-looking persons; and he naturally and very justly concluded that they were equivalent to a mayor and corporation: what they were called in French was to him a mystery. The large dark man slowly and distinctly questioned him; and seeing that the prisoner comprehended him not, he repeated his queries so loud as to startle one whose nerves were already shattered. It is a very odd thing that we are all apt to resort to this

expedient of shouting when we talk to people in a language they do not understand, though we never yet met with any one who comprehended us the better for it! David shook his head, and equally loudly made a little address in English; and then all the heads of all the dignitaries were shaken in token of ignorance.

This seemed a very bad business; "For," said David to himself when he got back to his prison, (having nobody else to say it to,) "if I am hung at Arras, (and Arras *hangings* are celebrated!) I sha'n't even have the satisfaction of making an intelligible last dying speech!"

At this moment the key grated in the lock, the door opened, and an English gentleman entered: the town had been ransacked for an interpreter, and Mr. Mildmay, an elderly gentleman, having been discovered at one of the hotels, he was requested to take the trouble of calling on poor David.

"I am sorry, sir," began Mr. Mildmay; but the solitary started up at the sound of the first English word, and ere he got further evinced an intention of throwing himself into the stranger's arms, which he, however frigidly avoided, and, seating himself, again commenced:—"I am sorry, sir, to find an Englishman thus situated: is there any thing I can do to serve you?"

"Talk to me—in the name of Heaven talk to me!" cried David, the tears, as Jacques says, "coursing one another down his innocent nose."

"I am aware of the crime you are said to have committed."

David shook his head and clasped his hands.

"May I venture to hope that you are able to give me an assurance that you are not guilty?"

David shook his head again.

"Unhappy man, I pity you!" said Mr. Mildmay: "let me look at your passport."

"I have lost it."

"Lost it!" said Mr. Mildmay incredulously.

"Yes, sir; and now pray tell me, if you can, what am I to expect?"

"The principal witness against you——"

"Witness!" interrupted David.

"Yes, the only one, as I understand."

"It *must* be Captain Kilkenny," thought David.

"—Was written to the day you were seized, and she is expected to-morrow," added Mr. Mildmay.

"*She!*" exclaimed David; "it *must* be Rebecca!"

"I do not know her name," replied Mr. Mildmay, rising to take leave. "If, unfortunately, you are guilty of the crime laid to your charge, she will of course identify you." The English gentleman then coldly withdrew, fully convinced that he had been talking to a very great rascal.

David threw himself upon his miserable bed, and gave way to the most fearful forebodings. Rebecca, then, had herself set out in pursuit of her lover's murderer, determined, no doubt, to exterminate him. Dreadful were his sufferings during that long dark night, and when morning dawned it brought him no comfort: on the contrary, it only brought him nearer to his fatal interview with Rebecca, the avenger! At length many voices were heard below, and, as is often the case, *one* female voice prevailed above all others; the door flew open, and Mr. Mildmay entered with her. But David saw them not; he had fallen with his face on the bed-clothes.

"*Voilà le prisonnier, madame,*" said he; and the female, rushing forward, took David by the arm and vigorously pulled him round. But he saw not the form of Miss Tatum, he heard not her accents! He beheld a middle-aged Frenchwoman, who exclaimed,

"*Oh! mon Dieu! ce n'est pas lui que nous cherchons!*"

"Not the man!" said Mr. Mildmay.

"Not Becky Tatum!" cried David, and fainted away.

It was long before the exhausted sufferer was suffi-

iently recovered to be moved to the hotel. Mr. Mildmay then informed him that he had been by mistake arrested instead of an Englishman who had committed forgery.

"Forgery!" said David: "I am innocent!"

"So it appears: but when I asked you two days ago whether you would assert your innocence, you refused to do so."

"Innocence!" said David, colouring up. "If I had known I was accused of forgery, I should readily have sworn I was innocent *of that*."

"Oh!" thought Mr. Mildmay, "the fellow *has* a crime on his conscience after all!"

"You are not going, sir?" said David.

"Yes, I am about to proceed towards Calais."

"I am going to travel that way too: may we not go together?"

"You must excuse me," said Mr. Mildmay coldly: and pray let me urge you, before we part, to endeavour to profit by your recent terrors,—for I plainly saw that you *did* fear the result."

"Terrors!" said David.

"Yes; if you have any guilty secret—"

"Mercy on me!" ejaculated David.

"I do not ask for a confession; but if you have, endeavour to atone for the past by the rectitude of your future conduct."

Mr. Mildmay left him; and on the following day David again entered the *coupé* of the Lille diligence, eling, as the ladies beautifully express it, "as well as could be expected after his confinement."

The first intelligence David heard in his native country was the death of his father. His successor in his old job had furnished him with a funeral: the mute was silenced, and the mourner mourned.

David Dumps became more serious than ever;—he had a decided nervous malady, an abhorrence of society, and a sensitive shrinking when he felt that any body was looking at him. He had heard of the invisible girl:—he

would have given worlds to have been an invisible gentleman, and to have glided in and out of rooms unheeded and unseen, like a draught through a keyhole. This, however, was not to be his lot; like a man cursed with creaking shoes, stepping lightly and tiptoeing availed not;—a *creak* always betrayed him when he was most anxious to creep into a corner.

At his father's death he found himself possessed of a competence and a villa; but he was unhappy. He was known in the neighbourhood: people called on him, and he was expected to call on them; and these calls and recalls bored him to death.

He never in his life could abide looking any one straight in the face,—a pair of human eyes meeting his own was always actually painful to him. Now he could endure it less: he fancied everybody would read his secret sorrow, his hidden guilt, in his face. It was not to be endured. He sold his villa, and determined to go to some place where, being a total stranger, he might pass unnoticed and unknown, attracting no attention, no remarks. He went to Brighton, consulted an eminent physician, and was recommended sea-bathing and horse-exercise.

The son of the weeper very naturally thought he had already "too much of water." He, however, hired a nag, as uncomfortable high trotting animal he had once bestrode in France as possible, took a small lodging, and as nobody spoke to him nor seemed to care about him, he grew rather more comfortable.

David was a swimmer; and when after a few quiet rides he began to feel more at home upon the animal, he used to trot him to a little snug recess in the cliff near Rottingdean, where he tied him to a post, and then, having deliberately undressed himself, he would plunge into the water.

One day—one luckless day, just as he had thrown off his last garment, it occurred to him that he might indulge his steed with a salutary dip by mounting him and urging him gradually into the advancing tide.

He did so, and sat erect upon the saddle like an equestrian Adam. The horse demurred, the water splashed around him and upon him; but David's clothes were safely piled upon a rock, and he heeded not the sprinkling. Suddenly, one billow more turbulent than the rest burst upon the shingles; the horse started, became utterly unmanageable, and dashed off at full gallop towards Brighton with David, naked as he was born, sitting on his back!

Imagine the misery of his situation! The shy, the modest David, hastening involuntarily towards the most public promenade in a state of nudity! In vain he pulled at the bridle; swifter and swifter rushed on the infuriated animal. He flew along the crowded cliff—he passed the steyne, thronged with fashionables listening to the band of a regiment of hussars. The music stopped—the ladies fainted—the gentlemen gazed in amazement—the children shouted. Still, on—on—went this unhappy Mazeppa, until he arrived at the door of his lodgings, where the horse stopped so suddenly that the rider flew head over heels, and pitched in a sitting posture on the pavement!

He was carried to his apartment more dead than alive; and during the evening crowds assembled round the house, and servants in livery were sent to inquire after the poor lunatic gentleman.

Life became a burthen to him;—he was a marked man!—*He*, whose only wish was to pass unnoticed, unheard, unseen;—*he*, who of all the creeping things on the earth pitied the glow-worm most because the spark in its tail attracted observation;—*he* to become the talk and the laughing-stock of a town like Brighton! He packed up in a hurry, went by a night-coach to London, and the very next day proceeded to Cheltenham, where we hope to find him in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XV.

BALLAD.

THE FRIENDS WHO SMILE NO MORE.

I.

I've seen you oft select a flower
 To wear upon some festive day;
 But, faded ere the evening hour,
 Without a thought 'twas thrown away!
 The flowers that deck a gay saloon
 We prize not when their bloom is o'er;
 And do we not forget as soon
 The once gay friends who smile no more?

II.

The wither'd rose we soon replace
 With one as fair as that we lose;
 And, won by some attractive face,
 As soon another friend we choose.
 But fleeting must such friendship prove,
 And dearer ties we shall deplore,
 When We, like those we used to love,
 Know what it is to smile no more!

"SURELY I know that voice!" said David to himself as he heard the above song warbled in the chamber adjoining his own at the Plough Hotel, Cheltenham.

The occupant of the next chamber was now heard walking about the room, putting by and locking up things; and then, humming the air of the song, he passed along the passage and descended the stairs.

David rarely sought the society of any human being; but the Cockles had been fellow-sufferers with him in his never-to-be-forgotten voyage, and so much had since their parting befallen himself, that he felt some curiosity to know how they had also fared. He therefore descended to the coffee-room, where, as he anticipated, he

d Mr. Lomax, who received him very cordially, aiming,

Ah! my little doleful Dumps!—*you* here! Well, I ope the waters will prove a Lethe to you, and banish recollection of all that used to bother you so on board Waterwagtail."

Thank you kindly," said David: "and where are and Mrs. Cockle?"

Oh, gone down——"

Gone *down*!" ejaculated David.

Pooh! hear a man out, can't you?—Gone down to place in Somersetshire;—not down in the Water-tail,—plenty of Cockles down there already: but as sold the yacht;—a change for the better, I think."

No doubt of it," replied David. "Are you going to here?"

To be sure I am," said Lomax. "The height of season, and very gay. To-day Lady Thimblorig a dinner, and Mrs. Tittytops gives a ball: you shall rith me to the latter if you like, and dance with the iest girl in the room."

Excuse me," replied David.

Oh, nonsense! you must."

My mourning!" interrupted David; "my respected nt not dead six months!"

Oh, I beg your pardon,—quite right: and what do mean to do?"

Why, though Cheltenham is to be my head-quarters, nk of making a few excursions: Tewksbury, Mal-, and perhaps Worcester, to begin with."

Well, then, in ten days or a fortnight, when you re-

I shall expect you to become a bright star in the sphere of fashion."

avid shook his head, and began his preparations for ip; and the next morning he arrived at Tewks- in time for breakfast.

e ought ere this to have described our hero. He rather *embonpoint*; but fat was not with him, as it times is, twin brother to fun: he wore a wig, and

the expression of his countenance was indicative of the seriousness of the turn of his mind.

He alighted from the coach at the principal inn; and the landlady, when she met him in the hall, started and stared, and then with most assiduous attention ushered him into her best parlour. He took her aside and briefly explained that retirement, quiet, and a back room to himself, were what he particularly wished to enjoy.

"I understand you, sir," said the landlady with a simper: "a little quiet will be agreeable by way of change."

"It will indeed," replied the traveller, solemnly.

"I hope you will find every thing here to your liking," said the hostess; and still, almost giving way to a laugh, she withdrew.

"Frank," said she to the head waiter, "who *do* you think we've got in the blue parlour! I knew him the minute I clapped my eyes on him!"

"And who is he?" said Frank.

"Why, the great actor, Mr. Liston! and he's dressed just as I saw him at the Haymarket, the only night I ever was at a Lunnion play; and 'twas '*Killing no Murder*,' and he was Polly Belly, or some such name; and he's dressed just the same now, all in black, with *such* a hat-band, and great white weepers!"

This brief dialogue will account for much disquietude which subsequently befel our ill-fated Dumps. People met him, he could not imagine why, with a broad grin! As they passed, they whispered to each other, and the words "inimitable!" "clever creature!" "irresistibly comic!" evidently applied to himself, reached his ears. He became more serious than ever: but the greater his gravity, the more the people laughed.

One night—*could* he believe his ears!—as he ascended the stairs, with a flat-candlestick in his hand, intending to go early to his bed, he heard Frank the waiter whisper to Mary the chambermaid, (and they looked at him at the moment,) "*Killing no Murder!*"

Was, then, his secret known!—his *fatal* secret! He

rushed to his chamber, bolted the door, and spent a night of sleepless anguish.

The next morning, with a broader grin than usual, the landlady ushered a gentleman into the blue parlour, and then retired, giving a knowing glance at her guest as she shut the door.

"My name, sir, is Opie," said the unknown.

"Is it, sir?" replied David.

"I hope you intend gratifying the good people of Tewksbury?"

"Gratifying! what *can* you mean?"

"There would not be a box to be had," said Opie, bowing.

"I always look after my own boxes," replied Dumps.

"As you please,—but you *will* come out?"

"Come out! to be sure, if it's fine."

"What do you mean to come out in?"

"What I've got on," said David, sulkily.

"Oh, that is so like you!" said Opie, laughing; "you really *are* inimitable: but what *character*?"

"Character!—*here*?—the Stranger."

"The Stranger! *you*!"

"Yes, *I*."

"And you really mean it?"

"Why, yes, to be sure,—I'm just come:" and David, thinking he had been talking to a madman, walked away to the window; and when he again looked round, Mr. Opie was gone. Shortly afterwards he saw a man very busy pasting bills upon a dead wall opposite; and so large were the letters, that he easily deciphered,

The celebrated Mr. Liston in Tragedy!

This Evening,

THE STRANGER!

The part of the Stranger by Mr. Liston.

Dumps had never seen the inimitable Liston—indeed comedy was quite out of his way; but now that the star was to shine forth in tragedy, the announcement

was congenial to the serious turn of his mind, and he resolved to go.

He ate an early dinner, went betimes to the theatre, and established himself in a snug corner of the stage-box. The house filled, the hour of commencement arrived, the fiddlers paused and looked towards the curtain, but, hearing no signal, they fiddled another strain. The audience became impatient; they hissed, they hooted, and they called for the manager. Another pause, another yell of disapprobation, and the manager, pale and trembling, appeared, and walked hat in hand to the front of the stage. Mr. Opie cleared his throat, bowed repeatedly, moved his lips, but was inaudible amid the shouts of "Hear him!"

At length silence was obtained, and he spoke as follows:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—I appear before you to entreat your kind and considerate forbearance. I lament as much as you the absence of Mr. Liston; but in the anguish of the moment one thought supports me,—the consciousness of having done my duty. (*Applause.*)

"I had an interview with your deservedly great favourite performer this morning, and every thing appeared well understood between us. I have sent to the hotel, and he is not to be found. (*Disapprobation.*) Under those distressing circumstances, I have only to entreat your indulgence for Mr. Grimshaw, who on his *début* last week in the part of Jeremy Diddler was so favourably received. He will kindly read the part of the Stranger. (*Mingled hissing and applause.*)

"For Mr. Liston's safety my mind is intensely anxious. I have been informed that he dined early, and left the hotel, saying he was going to the theatre. What accident can have prevented his arrival, I am utterly at a loss to——"

Mr. Opie now happened to glance towards the stage-box. Surprise! doubt! anger! certainty! were the alternate expressions of his pale face and widely-opened

eyes; and at length, pointing to Mr. Dumps, he exclaimed,

"Ladies and gentlemen,—It is my painful duty to inform you that Mr. Liston is now before you: there he sits,—the gentleman in black, I mean, at the back of the stage-box; and I trust I may be permitted to call upon him for an explanation of his most extraordinary conduct."

Every eye turned towards David, every voice was uplifted against him. The man who could not endure the scrutiny of *one* pair of eyes now beheld a houseful of them glaring at him with angry indignation.

"That is not Liston!" said one.

"Not Liston?" cried another.

"An impostor!" vociferated a third.

"A hoax!" became the universal shout.

His head became confused; he had a slight consciousness of being elbowed through the lobby, of a riot in the crowded street, and of being protected by the civil authorities, against the uncivil attacks of the populace.

He was conveyed to bed, and awoke the next morning with a considerable accession of nervous malady.

He soon heard that the whole town vowed vengeance against the infamous and unprincipled impostor who had played off a practical joke on the public, and at dead of night did he escape from the town of Tewksbury in a return-hearse going to Malvern, with which he was accommodated by his tender-hearted landlady, who never confessed to him that she had been the real cause of his discomfiture. On arriving within a mile of Malvern, he crept from his dark and most appalling vehicle, and with his carpet-bag he walked disconsolately to the hotel.

The balmy air and the tranquillity of Malvern were truly congenial to poor David's feelings after his recent very serious discomfiture: his spirits soon rose, and he gained sufficient courage to dine at the public table. Chance had placed him next to a very smart and pretty

girl, who during the first days of his entering into the society of the boarding-house interested him much. She, like himself, seemed to have "a silent sorrow" somewhere: she often sighed, and sat in a state of evident abstraction, unconscious of the plate of soup before her and of the morsel of fish which found its way into her mouth. She ate very little; and that little seemed only taken to quiet the apprehensions of her tall thin mamma, or appease the threatening anger of her short fat papa. The only thing which she really seemed to relish was her one glass of wine; she raised it to her lips, raising at the same time her blue eyes to the ceiling, and then slowly drained it, as if drinking to the health of the little bronze Cupid from which the central chandelier was suspended. When her glass was replaced upon the table, she relapsed into a dreamy cogitation, and never spoke until her lady-mother rose to leave the room; and then she languidly followed.

David spoke to nobody, and he considered it an unusual instance of good fortune having been placed next to a gentle being who never spoke to him. His apartment was next to that occupied by this interesting girl: this he ascertained from occasional meetings in the passage, and the necessity of standing aside to let her pass; and though they never exchanged a word, a neighbourly feeling was established between them.

One morning he heard the sound of lamentation in that chamber; the voice of the little lady was raised to the highest note of its compass, but was at length drowned by the basser tones of her father, and David could not avoid hearing part of the conversation.

"I'll never believe it!" cried the young lady; "never!"

"Do you think your father would tell a lie!" screamed her mamma.

"You acknowledge that you expected him to write to you?" said her father.

A burst of tears was the only reply.

"Has he not deceived you?—have you received one line from him?" inquired the old gentleman, who well

knew she had not, he having intercepted and burnt three dozen letters and a half.

"I will not believe that he is false," cried the daughter.

"Oh!" screamed her mother, "I should like to beat you!"

"Silence!" said the more artful and systematic papa: "do not upbraid poor Lavinia; she will have enough to mortify and vex her, poor thing, when she knows all."

"What do you mean?" inquired Lavinia.

"It *must* humiliate a girl so, to think she has been breaking her heart for a fellow who don't care twopence for her."

"Thank goodness I never did that!" said the senior of the two ladies: "nobody knows how your papa solicited me."

"I beg you will tell me what you allude to," exclaimed Lavinia, wiping her eyes and assuming composure. "If I *have* been deceived in Captain Claverton, tell me so at once; prove it, and I will give him up."

"There's my own Lavy!" said her father. "Mind now, if I convince you, you have promised to forget him."

"I did not say *that*, sir; I feel that I should be promising what I never could realize, but I will never speak of him; I will endeavour to obey you in all things: is there any other person that you wish me to marry?"

"No, not just now," replied her father; "but I wish you not to frown at every man you meet, as you have done since that fellow——"

"Do not abuse him, sir; state what you know against him, and then drop the subject. He may be false and I may be led to acknowledge it; but let it be understood between us that he is not to be censured before me. However culpable, however ungrateful he may be, I am at least unchanged, and will never indulge in such pitiful revenge as verbal abuse."

"He is going to be married!" said her father, unbuttoning his waistcoat and buttoning it up again, while he watched the effect of the shot he had fired.

"Married!" cried Lavinia; "to whom, sir?" and she

deliberately, and apparently calmly, left her seat, and walked over to her father.

"To a wealthy widow at Richmond,—Mrs. Pemberton Pole."

"How long, sir, have you known this?"

"We have known that he withdrew his pretensions to yourself ever since I wrote to him stating that you were entirely dependent; and that you would never inherit a shilling from me if you married him."

"You wrote to him to that effect?"

"I wrote to him to that effect," replied her father, looking her full in the face; for *now* he was telling the truth.

"And he explicitly stated that he withdrew his pretensions?"

"Of course," answered the old gentleman, looking another way, for the captain had done no such thing.

"You should have told me this before," said Lavinia, returning to her seat, and putting her handkerchief to her eyes.

"We did not like to distress you," said her mother.

Lavinia looked at her for a moment with a piteous smile, but did not reply.

"This Mrs. Pemberton Pole is the widow of a very rich distiller, not young, not good-looking, not in the best society," exclaimed the old man, wiping his spectacles.

"Poor fellow! I pity him," said Lavinia. "You are quite sure that what you state is correct?"

"Quite."

"He will then be wretched; and as for *me*—but I will not speak of myself: surely it must be a painful reflection to you both."

"What do you mean?" inquired the elder lady.

"To think that you have made a fellow-creature miserable; one, too, who never injured you,—one who, on the contrary, evinced the warmest affection for your only child."

"Miserable! not a bit of it; rich widow,—nonsense—happy as the day is long."

"You, who have seen so much of Captain Claverton, must know that he is not the man to be happy after making such a marriage."

"Well, miss, then why does he marry?—what is it all to me, or your mother? Captain Claverton is nothing to us."

"He was nothing to either of you when my mother met him at Brighton, and fancying that he was the eldest son of Sir Harry Claverton, sought him out, never rested till she was introduced to him, and made me dance with him, and accept his attentions at a time when I cared not for him, and when I'm certain he never thought of me."

"Very wrong of your mother," said the old gentleman, unbuttoning his waistcoat; "I admit *that* was very wrong indeed."

"And was it not equally wrong in you to ask him almost daily to dine with us?—what could he suppose but that his proposal would be accepted?"

"I was unguarded, certainly," and the waistcoat was buttoned up again:—"but if younger sons *will* intrude themselves into society, they must take the consequences."

"We were not to blame, then," added Lavinia, "if thrown *by you* so much together, we became attached; the error was your own, but the punishment falls heavily on us."

"You must be more wary in future, *my dear*," said her papa to her mamma.

"And you must not be so egregiously foolish, *my love*," said her mamma to her papa.

"These recriminations are idle," exclaimed Lavinia. "I will not say one word more about him:—tell me candidly what is it you wish me to do; it is indifferent to me now. Is there any other person—"

"No, not exactly—"

"Why," interposed her mother, "that gentleman who sits next to you daily at dinner—"

"I am not to marry *him*!" cried Lavinia in a tone of voice not flattering to David, who heard almost all that was said.

"Marry him!—no—that is, there's no knowing: somebody said he seemed to have plenty of money; and a quiet independent gentleman is not to be met with every day."

"He is very quiet," replied Lavinia, mentally contrasting David and Captain Claverton.

"All I ask is, don't sit silent and sulky by *him*, or any other marriageable young man; *I never* did at your age," said her mother.

"I will try to do as you wish," answered Lavinia.

"That's a good Lavy," cried her father, kissing her.

"You know our only thought is your happiness," added her mother, kissing her on the other side. And thus poor Lavinia was fondled by the two beings who, actuated by worldly and mercenary motives, had involved her in an attachment, from which it appeared that they expected her to recede at the word of command.

At the dinner-hour that day, Davie, as usual, was seated next to his hitherto taciturn companion. She looked pale, and had evidently been weeping, and she evinced no inclination to address him; but her mother, who seemed anxious to divert her thoughts, after requesting him to give her some sweetbread, said, in a bland and gentle voice, utterly unlike that which had startled him through the partition in the morning,

"Lavinia, *dearest*, these are excellent! Mr. Dumps, pray oblige me by helping Miss Jones?"

David, of course, did as he was desired; and then, clearing his voice, made some sage remark respecting the bad weather past, the little gleam of sunshine present, and the very fine days which it was to be hoped were to come. Miss Jones was equally common-place in her reply, and then they both relapsed into silence.

"You drink white wine, I perceive, Mr. Dumps," said old Jones: "Madeira, or Sherry?"

"Sherry," replied David.

"Quite right,—less acidity; my bottle is Sherry also. Allow me the pleasure of taking wine with you?"

And David went through the evolutions of filling, smiling, bowing, and drinking.

"Dumps is an uncommon name?" observed Mrs. Jones.

"It is a strange name, truly," replied the possessor of it, wondering whether she meant to be rude.

"Strange? oh, not at all," added the lady. "Let me see,—Dumps? Dumps?—surely we have met with the name somewhere?" and she appealed to her husband.

"Dumps?" replied Mr. Jones: "I can't say I know it."

"Are you of the Derbyshire Dumpses?" inquired the mother, trying an experiment.

"I'm not aware of it, if I am," replied David; "in fact I never attempt to conceal that my father made his fortune in trade."

"Quite right," answered Mrs. Jones, satisfied with the word *fortune*, but hoping that no one else at the table had heard any thing about *trade*, in case any thing *should* occur between him and Lavy. "I honour the man who avows it; though *our* family, by the way, is very ancient!"

(Mr. Jones's grandfather had been what is called a *bow-man*.)

"But surely we *did* meet some *nice* person of your name somewhere.—Dumps?—yes, I'm sure of it; perhaps your elder brother?"

"I have no brothers," replied David.

"Indeed! an *only* child?" inquired Mrs. Jones.

"Yes."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Jones, with an air of satisfaction; and though there was an arch smile on Lavinia's lip, she

thought to herself, "Would that my mother had always been equally minute in her inquiries!"

"Do you know many people at Malvern?" inquired Mrs. Jones.

"No, ma'am, none," replied David.

"Indeed!" Oh, we have a charming little circle here,—confined, of course, but infinitely interesting:—Will you favour us with your company at tea this evening! You will meet *dear* Mrs. Hoby, the *sweet* creature, who has the *sweet* children, and whose husband writes the *sweet* books!"

David accepted this luscious invitation, but saw very little of the lady so celebrated for sweets, being thrown completely into Lavinia's society; and though she must have been annoyed at her mother's manœuvres, she was too well-bred and too good-natured to allow an inoffensive stranger to suffer for the annoyance inflicted upon her by another person.

Day after day, and week after week, did Mrs. Jones possess herself of the pliant Mr. Dumps: living under the same roof, there was no chance of escape, and indeed Miss Jones's manners were so gentle and pleasing that he delighted in her society, and was never happier than when walking by the side of her donkey.

As to loving her, such an idea never entered his imagination; he was not the man to love first. Had she evinced any partiality for him, it was quite impossible that it should not be reciprocal; but for David seriously to *fall* in love, as it is called, with a girl so very young, so very pretty, would have appeared to himself just as presumptuous and absurd, as if he were to take it into his head to get some queen divorced from some king, that he might be enabled to marry her majesty.

Lavinia really rather liked him than not, (a negative sort of compliment truly when applied to the estimation in which a gentleman is held by a young lady; he was quiet, amiable, and inoffensive;—and she had taken good care to prevent his being misled as to her appreciation of him, having more than once alluded to a *some-*

thing which preyed upon her mind, and which was perfectly intelligible to David, after the conversation which he had once involuntarily overheard.

But the discreet and kindly-intentioned precautions of a good honest-hearted girl like Lavinia are utterly unavailing when there is such a mother at her elbow as Mrs. Jones. After daily involving David, almost whether he liked it or not, in the necessity of attending on Lavinia, or openly avowing his disinclination to do so, she one day advised her daughter to remain at home on account of some imaginary cold, and then seated herself at her tambour-frame to receive David alone.

"Ah, Mr. Dumps!" said she as he entered; "how are you?—You look pale!—are you *sure* you are quite well? Do let me send you a *little* remedy to-night. No!—well, of course you know best; I am always a *fond* foolish creature about people who are in any way connected with me."

David, not quite understanding her, which in truth was often the case, sat down and said nothing.

"You know *dear* Lavy has a cold? No!—Oh yes, a *sad* cold, poor *dear* interesting girl! People talk of her beauty,—I scarcely think of it;—her many excellent mental qualities are what *I* value!"

"Yes, to be sure," said David.

"What will become of me when she marries, it is impossible for me to guess; yet marry she must, sooner or later!"

"Of course," replied David.

"But, poor little innocent dear, I do believe it is a notion that has never entered her mind."

"Indeed!"

"Or, if it ever has, not till *lately*," added Mrs. Jones, looking at David.

"Oh!" replied he, looking at Mrs. Jones.

Mrs. Jones looked down on her embroidery, and did not quite know what to say next.

"Do you know this flower?" inquired she at last.

David rose, looked at a confused jumble of red, blue,

yellow, and green worsteds, and replied, "Yes, a devil in a bush!"

"Be quiet, Mr. Dumps!" cried the matron affectedly, and tapping his shoulder with her finger. "Tis heart's-ease."

"Ah!" ejaculated David.

"Heart's-ease, Mr. Dumps!" said Mrs. Jones sentimentally, looking up at her guest. "How rarely a woman's lot!"

David made no answer, because he had nothing to say; so Mrs. Jones was obliged to proceed.

"You men! you naughty men are our bane! how often do you trifle with the first affections of an unsophisticated heart! You look shocked:—do not, pray, misunderstand me. I know you are incapable of such conduct;—you appreciate the treasure thrown in your path. I need not ask one overflowing with benevolence like yourself, what are your intentions towards my too susceptible Lavinia?"

David opened his eyes very wide, now for once perfectly understanding Mrs. Jones, but he could not frame a reply.

"I have confided in you," said she; "and I know you will not abuse my confidence. She is *indeed* a treasure!—is she not?"

"Why,—I,—oh!—a treasure?—Miss Jones,—of course quite a treasure!" stammered David.

"One calculated to make any man happy?"

"Happy?—why as to that—oh, if you mean to ask me—I should say—Of course *any* man would be happy!"

"Your frank and honourable avowal of admiration is highly creditable; and to put you out of all suspense, I will leave you, and at once communicate what has passed between us to Lavinia and Mr. Jones. By-the-by, I *never* saw *dear* Mr. Jones take to any body as he has done to you!—it quite surprises me,—something quite *paternal* in his manner; and you who have had the misfortune to lose your parents will appreciate that advantage. As for myself, I need not speak of *my* partiality;

it seems to me almost an infatuation!" And Mrs. Jones went up to David, took his hand, and rubbed her cheek against his mouth; and it was not until she had left the room, that he recovered himself sufficiently to comprehend that he was in a false position, having apparently proposed to Miss Jones, and kissed her mother, without having the least intention of doing either one or the other.

Lavinia's astonishment knew no bounds. "Proposed for me?"

"Yes, and in the most delicate way. I quite felt for him, poor young man! his melancholy is *very* touching."

"But surely it was impossible he should be ignorant of—of—" And Lavinia paused, and burst into tears.

"He knows all," replied Mrs. Jones, "and he honours you for the magnanimity with which you have—"

"Oh, pray do not talk of that," interrupted her daughter: "do you really believe he loves me?"

"Devotedly."

"And you are satisfied with him?"

"I have made every inquiry, and his income must, I am sure, be considerable."

"Then he is all you and my father can wish; and, as for me,—'tis well he is no worse."

"You consent to receive him, then?"

"Is my father satisfied?"

"Your father is now closeted with Mr. Dumps."

"Then in your hands and his I place my life: my happiness has long been out of the question."

In the mean time Mr. Jones, having received a hint from his wife, had gone to the room where she had left her dismayed visiter.

"Well, Mr. Dumps," said he, "glad to see you; Mrs. Jones has told me all; give me your hand."

David extended his hand, and submitted quietly to the shaking which it underwent. "Sir," said he, "you do me much honour, but—"

"I think I've heard you say that all your money is in the funds?" interrupted Mr. Jones: "in these times the

best place for it; I have no doubt we shall understand each other."

"I beg your pardon," replied David, "but I had supposed that your daughter had formed some other attachment."

"Very right to ask the question: I honour you for coming to the point. A mere childish fancy, nothing more; and the moment she made your acquaintance, she gave it up, and seemed to think of it with shame and regret!"

"Indeed!"

"Yes, to give you a proof, she has never mentioned it since, I give you my honour, *never!*"

"Well," thought David, "I *am* a fascinating creature, that's clear."

It was difficult even for so expert a manager as Mrs. Jones to keep her two puppets in order; but she did contrive to make Lavinia believe that David was really in love with her, and that his seriousness was occasioned by a very natural dread that her former attachment to Captain Claverton would prevent her ever consenting to a marriage with him. Lavinia had suffered so severely herself, that she could not endure the idea of making David miserable, and as she felt certain that her parents would never let her alone till she had married somebody, she really thought it would be as well to be led to the altar by David at once.

David certainly was not in love, and her imputed love for him amazed and bewildered him: it was not what he wished, the very last thing, indeed, that he ever should have sought; and when he looked forward to his marriage, and going through life by the side of a creature so young and so fair, he really felt alarmed and almost inclined to advise her, as a friend, to turn the matter over seriously in her mind, and weigh all the contingencies well, before she took the irrevocable step.

All seemed progressing towards the consummation so devoutly, or perhaps it were more just to say, so diabolically wished by Mrs. Jones, and her worldly-wise

spouse, when an event occurred which utterly disarranged all their plans.

David was one morning sitting in his private room, when the door was violently thrown open, and a tall handsome young man entered, panting with excitement, and trembling with agitation.

"Your name is Dumps, sir, I believe," said he.

David, in astonishment, bowed assent.

"You are the man I seek, then," replied the stranger, throwing himself into a chair. "I have but a very few words to say: you are, I understand, about to be married to Miss Jones?"

"I believe so," said David.

"Then, sir, I tell you frankly," exclaimed the stranger, with vehemence, striking his clenched fist upon the table, "that if you persist in your suit to that young lady, I will see your flesh rot inch by inch from your bones."

"Mercy on me!—who are you?" cried David.

"My name is Claverton. By what extraordinary art such a thing as you could have gained her affections—But no, I do know poor Lavinia too well to believe that possible: you are the base accomplice, or the infatuated tool of her mercenary parents, and by Heaven you shall rue the day that you dared to interfere with me."

"Be pacified, Captain Claverton," supplicated David.

"Pacified! never! I challenge you instantly to meet me on the hill—I have pistols,—Come, sir, come."

"Never!" replied David, "never!"

"What! a coward! refuse me the satisfaction of a gentleman!"

"Pray hear me for one moment patiently."

"Proceed," replied the captain contemptuously.

"I am going to reveal to you, what no other human being has a suspicion of: it is not many weeks since I *did* go out to shoot, and to be shot at."

"Well?"

"He fell,—horrible recollection!—I will never fight again."

"Will you give up the lady, sir?"

"Oh dear me!" exclaimed David, "I would not interfere with any body for the world; and if *she* had not taken a fancy to me, I—"

"Puppy!" cried Claverton.

"Well, I don't wonder you should say so," said David. "But were *I* to accede to your wishes—and I give you my word it's just the same to me,—I'm certain her worthy parents will never let me off."

"*Worthy* parents! a couple of contemptible—But no matter, I insist upon your going instantly to Mr. Jones and telling him you resign your pretensions to his daughter."

"Oh, I'll do that with pleasure; it will really, between ourselves, be a weight off my mind."

"Go, sir, but do not mention my name; I shall in due time announce myself to the pitiful—"

"Hush!" whispered David, "Miss Jones hears every word you say."

"What! concealed in your room?"

"No, no," exclaimed David, horrified at the imputation, "but that partition is slight, and her chamber is—"

Before he could finish the sentence, Captain Claverton had left him, and in a moment David heard an exclamation of joy, and two voices in earnest and confiding conversation: he really felt happy at the reunion of the lovers, and walked off to pay his morning visit to the gentleman who was to have had the honour of becoming his father-in-law. It was rather puzzling to know exactly how it was best to begin, but after the first salutations of the day, he seated himself, and without any preliminary said,

"I am come, Mr. Jones, to tell you, that feeling as I do, utterly unworthy of possessing such a treasure as your daughter—"

"Pooh! pooh! too modest by half," interrupted Jones.

"I come here formally and unequivocally to relinquish my pretensions."

"What!" exclaimed Jones, starting up.

"I have said precisely what I mean," said David demurely.

"Give up my daughter!"

"Sorry I'm prevented having the honour of—"

"Don't talk to me as if you were sending an excuse to a dinner-party; I'm not to be trifled with!"

And the short fat man, red with anger, strutted before our hero in an attitude of defiance.

"Pray be pacified!" said David.

"Pa—pa—pacified!" spluttered Jones. "Come out with me,—pistols,—one shall fall!—Come out, Sir!"

"This is the second time I've been challenged to-day," replied David.

"I don't care for that, Sir;—seek out a friend;—I'll meet you with mine!"

"For the second time I decline fighting."

"Decline fighting!—coward!—dastard!—poltroon!" and Mr. Jones danced about with rage.

Before he had, in any degree regained his composure, Captain Claverton entered the room, and walking up to David, he extended his hand towards him.

"I beg to apologise to you, Sir," said he; "I find that your conduct has been kind and considerate; I perceive I must seek elsewhere for those who have so deeply wronged me."

Mr. Jones, on Claverton's first entrance, had stood still in amazement, but he now began to strut about and splutter more vehemently than before.

"Pray do not fatigue yourself," said Claverton; "I have little to say; and I am glad to perceive that my excellent friend Mrs. Jones will also be present." And Mrs. Jones entered the room with a flushed and angry countenance.

"What does all this mean?" said she.

"It means, madam, that I am *not* married to Mrs. Pemberton Pole of Richmond, and never had the honour of more than the very slightest possible acquaintance with that elderly widow."

"Really," exclaimed Jones, "it does not concern us; we *may* have heard it, and we *may* have repeated it."

"No harm of course in *that*," replied Claverton. "I may have heard, and may have repeated, that, on account of the failure of your many speculations, you have not a shilling in the world—"

"What!" cried Jones, turning pale.

"And that while appearances could still be kept up, you have been anxious to marry your child to the first man who could provide for her."

"Water! water!" screeched Mrs. Jones.

"Do not faint, madam; I think I can revive you," said Claverton.

"Nay, let *me* support her;—she has evinced quite a maternal fondness for *me*," cried David.

"You are all in a plot against me," exclaimed the lady, nearly pushing David down.

"Do not suppose, madam," said Claverton, "that having heard of Mr. Jones's impending misfortune, I have come hither meanly to insult you. My love for your daughter is unalterable; and I am here to state that, through the unexpected liberality of an uncle, I am in a situation amply to meet *your* wishes. I have just heard from her own lips that *her* affections have never for a moment swerved from me."

Mrs. Jones, who had cheered up a little, during this address, now winked her eye, and made an odd mouth at the captain, and tried to touch his foot with hers.

"Why, really—perhaps, as you say—that is, had it not been for Mr. Dumps's delicate attentions—"

"Oh! no more deceptions, if you please," interrupted Captain Claverton; "Mr. Dumps is now sufficiently in all your secrets to judge pretty accurately what part you meant *him* to have acted!"

"I congratulate you with all my heart, sir," said David; "*and myself too!*" added he in a low voice.

"Well, now really, Captain Claverton," exclaimed Mrs. Jones in her softest tone, "after all, you are the

best creature!—such a *sweet* way of surprising us about *your dear* uncle!”

“Have I your permission to announce to Miss Jones that her parents sanction my addresses?” inquired Claverton with a glance of contempt.

“Certainly,” replied Jones, fidgeting out of the room and looking very much ashamed of himself.

“And yours, madam?”

“To be sure, my *dear* Captain Claverton,” answered the lady. “My *sweet* Lavinia must reinstate me in your good graces: you were always such a *dear* creature, that I quite look forward with pleasure to visiting you in some *sweet* cottage, in some *charming* neighbourhood. You must forgive poor *dear* Mr. Jones;—as for myself, I never had a voice in the business—*never*!”

Claverton bowed, and made no reply; but to David he said, “I really hope that my happiness has not thrown any gloom over *your* prospects.”

“No,” replied David; “I only yielded to what appeared to be the wishes of others.”

“I believe you; and be assured I shall be happy to meet you again.”

Captain Claverton was soon seen from the windows of the hotel, walking by the side of the now happy Lavinia; and David, thinking that his presence, after what had passed, might render her situation embarrassing, wrote her a kind and considerate farewell note; and, without waiting either for a reply or an interview, he ordered post-horses, left Malvern that very evening, and returned to his apartments at Cheltenham, not over-pleased with his very eventful tour.

CHAPTER XVI.

LET us for once look at David in a position of at least comparative comfort. We now find him in Mr. Lorimer Lomax's private apartments, sitting at a table on which are decanters and a dessert. His glass is full, and with a steady hand he carries it to his lips. Lomax is at the head of the table; and opposite to our hero sits a man of about thirty, who has been introduced to him as the medical attendant of the host.

"Well," said Lomax, "I am glad that for once I have induced you to be communicative. I have invited my friend Galen here to meet you, because I really wish you to consult him."

"Ah," replied David, "what can *he* do for me?"

"I can prescribe another bumper of port," said the medical man, at the same time filling his glass, which he had but that moment emptied.

"You'll make me tipsy!" cried David.

"Better to be tipsily gay, than soberly sad," replied Lomax.

"And after all, what have you to be seriously sad about?"

"Hav'n't I told you enough?"

"No," said the Galen. "When you are the victim of a practical joke, laugh and *pretend* not to care, and people will not trouble you again: you, however, evince just the annoyance which amuses them, and so you are the man of all others to become the butt of society."

"I'm much obliged to you," said David: "besides, you don't know *all*; there's one thing untold, which I can never tell."

"Oh, some nonsense," said the apothecary. "Why, if I had taken things to heart as you have done, I should have been as wretched as yourself. I've had my disappointments: I once expected to be a man of fashion, yet here I am at Cheltenham, with blue, red, and green bottles in my shop-window!"

"A man of fashion!" said his host: "when was that?"

"I'll tell you when; and I'll also tell you of a hoax which was played off upon those who well deserved it."

"Another bottle first," interrupted Lomax, ringing the bell; and having obtained what he wanted, and passed it round, he added, "And now, Purvis, for your rise and fall in fashion's empire."

"With all my heart;—listen to my confessions:—

"My father and mother were tidy good sort of people of what is called the middling class of society; and at the age of thirty, I, John Purvis, do pronounce, as the result of my experience, that of all human beings they are the happiest who, when addressed with the interrogatory, 'How goes it with you?' can reply, '*Middling*, thank you.' My mother often talked to me of her only sister Kitty, who married a surgeon of a marching regiment shortly after she was herself united to my father. Kitty used to be voted a beauty; but (as she departed for India almost immediately after her marriage with Mister, or, as he used to be generally called by courtesy, Doctor Mason,) it was never my lot to look upon her personal charms, until they had been a little mellowed by time, and bleached—no, that is not the word—tinted with the 'yellow leaf,' by the warmth of a tropical sun.

"My parents died when I was commencing my teens, leaving me in the situation of assistant operative in the establishment of a dispenser of medicines in a certain country town. My master was much in repute; an irritable man, who taxed my *physical* power to the utmost. I was up early, swept the shop, attended to prescrip-

tions, served customers, pounded drugs, spread plasters, infused herbs, fed leeches, and balanced the books.

"It may be supposed I had not much time to spare for the acquirement of the graces: I lived in brown holland sleeves; pasted labels on phials, pill-boxes, and gallipots from morning till night, enveloping them in white paper, and directing them to the unfortunate invalids who, by their real or imaginary maladies, brought grist to my master's mill. I wasn't a bit like a gentleman; I never thought of pretending to be any thing of the kind: my predecessor had lost his situation on account of high-heeled boots, and hat on one side, and *chainery* and *sealery* propensities. This was a warning to me, and perhaps I verged into the opposite extreme; yet, notwithstanding my threadbare condition, Mr. William Cheeks would occasionally call in to see how the shop went on without him.

"In justice to myself, I must say it went on much better than it had ever done during his connexion with the establishment. Cheeks was a beau, and a wag, and a wit, and a practical joker; and how he came to take to me, I cannot quite understand. To be sure, he always made fun of me, and put pigtailed under the collar of my coat; and sometimes he tried to disarrange my professional proceedings, altering labels, that I might send lotions to those who wanted internal doctoring, and black draughts and salines to rub upon the legs and backs of others who had rheumatisms and lumbagoes. But I always frustrated his endeavours. During his apprenticeship many such errors had been unwittingly committed through his own carelessness: a gallipot of *lively* leeches had once been sent by him to a nervous lady, who, expecting nothing but a delicate conserve of roses, suffered the prisoners to escape, and nearly expired before they could be caught. Once, too, he tried to bleed a man in the unavoidable absence of my master: but—the less I say about *that* the better. Then, too, instead of balancing accounts, *he*, like a mountebank as he was, preferred balancing tobacco-pipes on his chin.

"Often would he pop his head in at the door, when he knew my master was absent, crying, 'There you are in the pillory, I see! Why, Purvis, my lad, you are as dull as the sediment at the bottom of a bottle of lotion! Do for goodness' sake effervesce for once, and come and take a lounge with me.' But Cheeks tempted in vain; I was constant to the laboratory until the occurrence of a great event,—an event little expected by my master and young Cheeks, still less by myself.

"Aunt Mason returned to England a rich and gay widow, without encumbrances. The doctor, having accumulated very considerable wealth, died and was buried; and his lady, reconciled to the event by the golden accumulation, wore weeds during the voyage, and considering them literally as *sea weeds*, discarded them the day she landed. Mrs. Mason, fortunately for me, (as I then thought,) had no male relative in the world excepting myself; and feeling as she said, the impossibility of managing an English establishment without the assistance and protection of a gentleman, she (forgetting that by birth, parentage, and education, I had been disqualified for the performance of the part,) wrote me a letter, desiring me to meet her in London, where it was her intention to give me every possible advantage, and introduce me to the fashionable world as her nephew.

"The prospect was truly exhilarating: I made up my last pill, bade adieu to Cheeks, and very soon made my appearance in Portland Place, where my aunt had already taken a large well-furnished mansion.

"I have said that my aunt and I had never met before: I am afraid she was rather disappointed at my appearance, and certainly she was not at all the sort of person I had expected to see. When I arrived, she was arrayed for an evening party at the house of an old acquaintance from Calcutta, where she was going to play an *India rubber* with some other Orientals.

"'John Purvis,' said my aunt, 'I'll introduce you to the fashionable world;' so I of course concluded that she was a leader of fashion herself; and when we pack-

ed up to leave London for the autumn and winter, intending to spend a few months at Leamington, I thought that we should find that popular watering-place a mere puppet-show, in which the scenes were to be shifted and the figures moved by Mrs. Mason and her interesting nephew. Leamington was full, but, to my great surprise, my aunt knew nobody there; in fact, I soon discovered that her own admission into fashionable society must be a preliminary move to the advance of her nephew. We must devise means to raise a kite, before we can hope to elevate its tail.

"In due course of time she formed a few acquaintances among the ladies with daughters, who, after visiting a watering-place for the express purpose of going into society, never allow a drawing-room to be illuminated, or a fiddle to be heard, without entering the one, or jigging to the other.

"Besides, my aunt was one of those who never lose any thing for want of asking; and on the slightest introduction, or no introduction at all, she would talk of her little party, and request the pleasure of seeing you at it.

"There was one lady at Leamington who particularly attracted her attention. She was comely and well-dressed, fat, fair, and forty, or thereabouts; she had an excellent house, carriages and servants, and seemed to know nobody. 'That,' said my aunt to me, 'is evidently *somebody*; see how she keeps herself aloof from the tag-rag of the place: I'm determined to know her, and to have her at my house.'

"Now, when my aunt was once determined to gain a point, she never rested until by hook or by crook she succeeded: and so it was with her fancy for the fair incognita of Leamington. She looked at her earnestly until she attracted the lady's attention; and then, in audible whispers to me, she proclaimed her admiration of her whenever she passed. The lady looked surprised, and seemed to avoid notice; but my aunt was not to be baffled, and she soon announced to me that she intended to give an evening party, and meant to astonish her

guests by introducing the unknown lady with the handsome equipage, who, after some hesitation, had promised to drink tea with her *quietly* on the following Monday. Had a duchess promised to drink tea with my aunt *quietly*, she would instantly have issued invitations to all the noisy chattering people she knew, intimating that they were to have the honour of meeting '*her grace*.' On the present occasion, however, having no title to announce, she kept her own counsel, leaving to her guests the enjoyment of an agreeable surprise when they should encounter the hitherto unknown and secluded stranger. Monday night at length arrived; tables were arranged for whist and *écarté*, and tea was distributed to about sixty persons who had attended the summons of 'Mrs. Mason at home.'

"It grew late, and my aunt became fidgety, for the interesting recluse had not yet made her appearance. At length we heard the approach of another carriage; a commotion took place on the stairs, the door was thrown open, and the footman announced 'Mrs. Thread-needle.' My aunt rapidly advanced to the door, and led forward her new acquaintance, who was adorned with feathers and flowers, and a short white satin dress looped up with daffodils. At the same instant a panic seemed to pervade the assembly: Mr. Decorum walked hastily to the bell, rang it violently, and when the servant appeared, ordered his wife's carriage; all the mothers and aunts cloaked and shawled their respective daughters and nieces; two most strictly particular old maids fainted dead away; and several gentlemen, after looking at each other in evident amazement, yielded to uncontrollable laughter. The less I say about the matter the better: the fact is, the interesting unknown *had no business there*; and my aunt has never since thrust her acquaintance upon a good-looking plump lady, merely because she wore fine clothes, had a good house, a smart carriage, and servants in livery.

"My aunt suddenly discovered that the air of Leamington did not at all agree with her constitution, and we

made a little tour, which in seasonable time ended at the door of the mansion in Portland Place.

"I have shown the danger of hastily forming *new* acquaintances; now I will prove that there is peril in deliberately cutting *old* ones. Every thing seemed to have prospered with my aunt: a lady well known to her in India had made a splendid second marriage, and through her means we were at length visited by many leading fashionables, and had a very extensive and satisfactory acquaintance. She therefore determined to announce her first ball; the night was fixed, nothing else intervened or clashed in any way with our arrangements, and Mrs. Mason's ball really promised to be a most successful affair.

"And only think, aunt Mason," said I, taking a card from the table; "only think of my old friend Cheeks being in London!—of course you will ask him on Wednesday night."

"Cheeks!" drawled my aunt; "who is Cheeks?"

"I knew him when I was in the shop," said I.

"Hem! what, a customer?" inquired my aunt.

"Oh no," said I: "Cheeks was my predecessor."

"You must cut him, then."

"And won't you invite him?" said I.

"Impossible!" replied my aunt.

"At this moment Mr. Cheeks was announced; and in walked my old acquaintance, looking very like a mercer's apprentice, but grasping my hand with warmth and good humour. Mrs. Mason raised her glass, threw one glance at his person, and gathering her cashmere about her, glided from the room.

"You are a lucky fellow, by Jove!" said Cheeks: "my eye, what a house! But you don't give me a proper welcome: an old friend's hand, *when taken, should be well shaken*; but you are like a cooling emulsion—your good fellowship has evaporated."

"And, pray," said I, "what brings you to London?"

"Oh!" said Cheeks, "I've been here a long time, walking hospitals, and that sort of thing; and now I've

set up for myself and drive a buggy. By-the-by, *you* can do me a power of good; introduce me at your aunt's party on Wednesday; say I cured her or yourself of some hitherto incurable complaint, and my fortune is made.'

" 'Cheeks,' said I, 'it cannot be.'

" 'No, no,' replied Cheeks, 'I only jest: but, without any puffing of that sort, I shall be happy to wait upon the good lady.'

" 'Cheeks,' said I, 'unless *she* invites you, I—I—in fact—I have not the power.'

" 'No, no, very proper,' he good-humouredly answered; 'but tell her we are old friends, and she *will* invite me.'

" 'It is best to be plain at once,' I replied: 'I *have* asked her to invite you, and she won't.'

" 'She won't!' cried Cheeks, colouring up to his eyes.

" 'She will not,' said I: but, to soothe him, I added, 'Look at this list of friends she has invited, and then, perhaps you will see that, as you don't know any of them—'

" '—I am not fit to sit in their company, I suppose you mean,' cried Cheeks indignantly, and taking from me the invitation list, over which he glanced his eye.

" 'I don't mean that, Cheeks,' said I, 'but—'

" 'No matter,' replied Cheeks, rising abruptly; 'my buggy is at the door, and I wish you a very good morning;' and, without saying another word, he walked off, and left me alone in my glory.

" I was vexed at this, for it was not in my nature to slight a person with whom I had once been on terms of intimacy: but I knew that expostulation with my aunt would be unavailing, so, endeavouring to purge my memory of the embryo doctor, I gave myself up to anticipations of the future.

" Wednesday night came at last; and my aunt descended from her chamber in an Indian muslin garnished with beetles' wings, a turban on her head, diamonds on her neck, bangles on her arms, and Delhi scarfs on

her shoulders. Together we perambulated the already brilliantly illuminated apartments: there were the exotics, and the candelabras, and the ottomans. The supper table was covered with every delicacy in and out of season; the china, the glass, the plate—all were unique of their kind. We had lingered too long in the temporary room; we expected to be too late to receive the first guests: but we found the ball-room still empty, and comfortably seated ourselves in solitary grandeur.

“‘That clock must be wrong,’ said my aunt.

“‘Yes,’ said I, perceiving it was very late; ‘but you know, aunt, they often put clocks wrong at balls.’

“‘True,’ replied she; and again we walked the rooms. Once or twice the servants came and fidgeted about, and cast inquiring glances towards us; but we took no notice, and again returned to our seats, complaining that we felt uncommonly sleepy.

“At length the inimitable Mr. Weippart approached us with his watch in his hand, inquiring whether it was possible that there could be *any mistake*.

“‘Mistake, my good sir!’ cried Mrs. Mason, starting up: ‘what can you mean by asking such a question?’

“‘I merely mean, madam,’ he replied, ‘that it is now considerably past one, and—’

“‘Past one!’ cried the lady in consternation, ‘and is *nobody* arrived?’

“‘No, madam: may I presume to ask if you are *certain* that the night was correctly stated on your cards?’

“‘Perfectly certain, sir,’ she answered, turning very pale; and again we paced the rooms.

“Two o’clock at length struck, and my agitated aunt could no longer restrain her anxiety; she grasped my hand convulsively, and bathed her brow with eau de Cologne.

“Mr. Gunter, and his merry men all, looked as anxious and disconcerted as ourselves; and Mr. Weippart feeling perhaps the silence too intense, and thinking that

a little music might help to pass away the time, suddenly struck up the galop from the Cheval de Bronze.

"My aunt started from her seat, gazed wildly round, and then fell down in a fainting-fit; and before she came to herself, she was by my direction carefully deposited in her bed, at three o'clock in the morning.

"Day began to dawn, the sun began to rise, and gradually the numerous cries of London were heard in the street. The lamps and candles were extinguished; the ices had lost their consistency, the fiddles had been deposited in their cases; Mr. Gunter was on his pillow in Berkeley Square, and Mr. Weippart and his band were gone to prepare for Lady Rigdum's *déjeûné* at Twickenham; when, yawning violently, and exhausted with agitation and disappointment, I retired to rest.

"At breakfast the mystery was explained. The house was all day long besieged by servants sent to inquire after me and my aunt, who, it appeared, had postponed her ball '*on account of the serious indisposition of her nephew, Mr. John Purvis.*'

"This was not to be credited; but I at length got possession of one of the notes which had been so strangely forwarded to every one of the guests invited by my aunt. At one glance I recognised the hand of Cheeks; and I then remembered that he must have carried off with him the list of the company which I had placed in his hand."

"Oh, the vagabond!" cried Lomax. "Well?"

"Well, my aunt soon after married, and retired to some country town, where no doubt she reigns an undisputed queen. As for myself, I was sick of floundering about in an element which I was never intended for, so I returned to the shop; and here I am as busy and as happy as the day is long."

"And where is Mr. Cheeks?" inquired David anxiously.

"Thank you for the inquiry: he is now my partner."

"Keep me out of his way, then," cried David: "he is the very sort of man I have a dread of."

"Nay," said Purvis, "he is older now, and too busy to tease idle people: and, Mr. Dumps, as I am to prescribe for you, let me whisper a word in your ear:—Had *you* a profession, or some rational pursuit to occupy your mind, you would not get into scrapes so often; and when trouble did fall in your way, it would not engross your thoughts and depress your spirits. Had I no shop and no patients, I should feel and look just as miserable as you do."

"Oh, but you don't know what I've got upon my mind!"

"Well, when we meet again, you may perhaps tell me," said the worthy apothecary, rising; "and as I have many visits to pay, I must wish you good night. And pray, Mr. Lomax, have the goodness to give my patient the remainder of that bottle in small doses,—a wine-glass at a time, and by no means to be shaken."

"And shall I take him to the Rotunda ball?"

"Certainly; and let him shake *himself* as much as he pleases."

"Well, Dumps," said Lomax when they were alone, "you are no longer your own master: let us finish the bottle, and then prepare for the ball."

"No, no," cried David.

"Your doctor's orders, and I'll see them enforced: in the first place, off with your dose."

We beg to say that our hero was by no means intoxicated; but the combined effects of social chat and good wine had so far elevated him, that of his own free will he went to adorn himself for the ball.

CHAPTER XVII.

DAVID DUMPS at a ball! Yes, and actually dancing!—and then sitting by his partner's side, and putting in a sober serious word now and then, in the intervals of her very animated conversation! He was, as we have before admitted, certainly elevated, saying much more than usual, and then having a very confused and imperfect recollection of what he *had* been saying.

Clara Titterton, to whom he had been introduced by Lomax, was a young lady approximating to thirty, the daughter of a widower, whose darling she naturally was.

Mr. Titterton did not accompany his daughter to balls and parties, for he was old and infirm; she therefore had always to seek a chaperon,—a circumstance equally disagreeable to herself and to her female friends; for mothers and aunts had always daughters and nieces of their own to take care of, and poor Clara often felt she was in the way. But Clara was one who soon reconciled herself to all inevitable events, good, bad, or indifferent; she had inexhaustible spirits and an ever-ready laugh, which was as exhilarating as it was contagious. She was by no means a beauty, but exceedingly well-looking; a round fair face, with sparkling eyes, a mouth full of white teeth, a dimple in each cheek and one in her chin, and ringlets waving round a white forehead. It all seemed formed and put together for laughter: and then her small round figure was equally adapted for the active evolutions into which laughter always throws her votaries. It was not only at ridiculous things that she laughed,—any body can do that,—but she could laugh off all

petty annoyances, and some that were too heavy to be laughed off she contrived to lighten by a laugh.

At thirty we find her unmarried; but not because she had never loved, or been wooed by lovers:—often had her laugh exhilarated a partner; and now and then, in shady pathways, had she laughed over happy day-dreams of futurity, arm-in-arm with him who at the time she looked upon as the partner of her life. But from all her day-dreams she had been startled by awkward realities; her loves had all been nipped in the bud: yet Clara never was cast down, or at all events never allowed the world to mark her chagrin. Some said she wanted feeling; for when all was at an end between her and the man she seemed to love the best, she heard his name mentioned shortly after, and yet laughed till she actually cried! Is it possible that they were mistaken, and the laugh was then assumed to *hide* the tears? Be that as it may, Clara still laughed on *with* a few people, and *at* a great many.

There was nothing spiteful, ill-natured, or satirical in Clara's laugh: she did not go out to *quiz*, and go home to caricature; she laughed at herself more frequently than at others; and when the joke was against herself, she delighted that others should laugh too.

David's solemnity of demeanour amused her exceedingly; and as they danced together, the contrast between herself and her partner frequently excited her risibility. She had a knack of finding out the good points in people's characters, and she considered him a well-meaning, good-hearted, low-spirited, inoffensive, nervous man. When David had danced his dance, and said his say, another partner was introduced to Miss Titterton, who led her away to join the dancers. The new partner was a very tall, handsome man, a major in the army, about forty-five years of age, well preserved and made up, padded and darkened. He seemed exceedingly taken with his laughter-loving acquaintance; danced her for half-an-hour, walked her for another half-hour, and sat her down for the rest of the evening in a corner, where, playing with her fan and looking unutterable

, he did utter a great deal of nonsense, and bewildered poor Clara, who however laughed all the while. At length she was summoned by her chaperon, the major shawled her, and shook *her* hand, and laid *his own* hand on his heart, bowing, sighing, and wiping up his eyes; and having deposited her in the carriage, he leisurely listened to the last sound of her wheels, and then marched off to the Plough Hotel.

When Clara got home, she ran laughing up to her mother, and whilst her maid was undressing her, she could not resist telling that a gentleman had paid her particular attentions, and had made her an offer.

"Offer, Miss! Oh, my!"

"Yes," cried Clara, laughing: "so absurd!—I pretended not to understand him; and then he asked if my name was in the room. When I said, 'No,' he cried, 'shall I live till to-morrow!—if I *do* live till to-morrow, I must throw myself at his feet!'"

"Oh! Miss,—how pretty!"

"Very funny, I think;—I wonder what I ought

to take my advice, Miss, and ask your papa to go and talk to him."

"I don't think I must," said Clara, laughing, as she put the letter in paper; and then, having thought over all the things that had been said to her, she put her head on her pillow, and again resolved to make her papa know at the Plough Hotel. But then it occurred to her that she had never ascertained his name:—it certainly began with D; but a card left '*for Mr. D.*' at a hotel would never do; and greatly amused at her embarrassment, she laughed herself to sleep.

The next morning, David was sitting about mid-day in the coffee-room alone, trying to amuse himself with a paper containing no news, when an elderly gentleman walked in, and, after looking deliberately round the room, called the waiter. At first he took no notice of what they were saying; but what passed between them attracted his notice.

"No, sir—can't say I do, sir," said the waiter.

"He was at the public ball last night," said the gentleman.

"Might be, sir—can't say,—so many gentlemen here:—let me see,—number 27?—no; number 27 is gone. Name begins with D, you said, sir?"

"Yes."

"D!—let me see,—we've had plenty of Ds here."

"But you have none now?" inquired the old gentleman.

"Oh! what *am* I thinking of!—I dare say that's the gentleman you mean, sir;—Mr. Dumps, sir."

The elderly gentleman approached David.

"Your name begins with D, I'm told?"

"My name is Dumps," said David, rising.

"Thank you, sir.—Waiter, you may leave us.—My name, sir, is Titterton."

"Pray sit down, sir," said David, wondering what was coming.

"You were at the ball last night, I believe?"

"I—I believe I was, sir."

"And you danced with my daughter?"

"Your daughter, sir!"

"My name is Titterton, as I said before."

"Oh! Titterton,—Mr. Titterton;—ah! yes; Miss Titterton—I remember now—the lady who laughed."

"You had a pleasant evening?"

"Why,—pretty well," said David.

"You can, I suppose, guess the cause of my doing myself the honour of calling on you to-day?"

"I, sir!" ejaculated David.

"Of course my daughter repeated to me what passed between you last night;—your very flattering approval of *her*, and your anxious desire to address *me*. I have but one child, sir, who will at my death inherit the little I possess. I of course can know nothing of your connexions, situation, or prospects; but if you are as frank as myself, I trust that our negotiations will terminate to the satisfaction of all parties."

David sat in utter consternation. Had he really made an offer of marriage the night before, and forgot all in

the morning! He had heard of such things, but he could not believe that his head could have been so confused.

"If you will walk with me as far as Cambray," said Mr. Titterton, "we may converse with less chance of being interrupted. You are agitated?—no wonder; it is a serious era in a man's life. Here is your hat, I believe?"

David passively took it, unconsciously put it on his head, and scarcely knowing what he was about, walked into the high street with his unexpected visitor: as the distance is but short, and he talked all the way, the involuntary Romeo found himself under the balcony of his Juliet before he had time to collect his ideas. She, however, was not seated there, leaning "her cheek upon her hand;" so the venerable parent opened his own door with a latch key, led him in, and David, as he ascended the last stairs, heard him say,

"Well, Clara, his name began with D, sure enough. I've found your last night's partner. It is not necessary for me to introduce Mr. Dumps to you."

Clara had risen, and walked a few steps forwards; but when she saw David enter, she started back, sat down upon the sofa, and, bursting into a fit of uncontrollable laughter, exclaimed,

"Oh! but this is *too* ridiculous!"

Not a muscle of poor David's countenance moved; and as Clara, unable to speak, continued to give vent to her risibility, Mr. Titterton, looking at her with displeasure, said,

"My dear, really this is too bad! Consider Mr. Dumps's feelings!"

"I do, I do," cried Clara; "what *can* he think?" and again she laughed; but suddenly rising, she said to her father in a half whisper,

"Dear papa, leave us together; you only add to his annoyance, and I will soon explain all."

Mr. Titterton, with some reluctance, bowed to David and left the room; and as soon as the door was closed, Clara again threw herself on the sofa, laughing more

immoderately than ever. Had he laughed too, had he even smiled,—or, on the other hand, had he risen from his chair, and stormed and stamped with indignation,—the young lady might sooner have tranquillised herself; but his dull immovability of feature, under existing circumstances, struck her as so supremely ridiculous, that it was long before she could articulate a syllable.

"I beg your pardon, sir," at length she almost sobbed; "I fear you must think me very rude."

"Not at all," said David: "if it is any amusement to you, pray don't mind me."

"I almost fear to ask you why you did us the honour of calling to-day; I fear my father—"

"Your father brought me."

"Then—I—I—fear that he inquired for you at the hotel."

"He did, madam."

"And—and—spoke of—of—"

"Marriage," said David, fixing his eyes on the carpet.

"Oh!" cried Clara, starting up and pacing the room, "this is beyond a laughing matter;" and then, leaning her elbow on the mantelpiece, and her forehead on her hand, she seemed for some minutes lost in thought. David all the time sat as still as a mouse, and said nothing.

"There is but one thing to be done," at length said Clara, as if soliloquising: "it is always best to come to the point, and undeceive a person at once." And she sat down again; and looking laughingly in David's face, she added,

"You came half unwillingly, I suspect."

David, looking askance at her good-humoured countenance, could not help replying,

"Oh, dear me, no."

"Indeed!" said Clara: "well, then, I've killed two birds with one Ball!"

"Ma'am?"

"You did not dance after you left me last night, I presume?"

"No," said David; "I seldom dance."

"I did," replied Clara.

"I know it: I saw you dancing with Major Dehaney."

"Dehaney!—oh! that was his name?"

"Yes; he was staying at the Plough, too, you know."

"Well," said Clara, "and have you seen him since?"

"Oh yes," replied David: "he came home last night infamously tipsy."

"Tipsy!"

"Yes, and set off at five o'clock this morning to join his regiment in the West Indies."

"You don't mean that!" exclaimed Clara, laughing again, though the laugh was now turned against herself.

"Have you known him long?" inquired David.

"Not very," she replied; "but I ought to have known him *better*."

"Ah, well, you must wait a long time for that; for I heard he stayed at Cheltenham till the very last moment, and that the ship was to sail to-night."

"So much for Major Dehaney!" said Clara; and then she began to consider what had best be done about the major's involuntary substitute. But before she could begin an explanation, Mr. Titterton returned and invited him to partake of their family dinner; and the invitation was accepted with so much satisfaction, that she had not the heart to interfere, but thought it best at all events to receive him that one day, and take a more favourable opportunity for extinguishing his too flattering hopes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"UPON my word, Mr. Dumps, you astonish me!" said Lorimer Lomax, after David had, with a faltering voice, detailed to him the result of his introduction to Miss Titterton. "Here have I been a man about town for we won't say how many years, and I've always been

obliged to make love for myself;—never yet found it ready made! Love at first sight, too! Why the devil ~~did~~ I take such a fascinating creature to the ball with me! had I not done so, I might have been the happy man!"

"Happy, do you call it?"

"Happy! to be sure! Something to love one, something to love! can aught else be wanting to ensure the happiness of a man?"

"Pleasant to love, certainly, provided it's reciprocal"

"Well, you don't dislike Miss Titterton?"

"Not at all; her laugh is so cheerful."

"You are inclined to like her, then, and will like her."

"But, suppose I did?"

"Why, she loves you already."

"How *can* that be on so short an acquaintance?"

"For my part," said Lomax, "I often wonder how two people can go on loving who have known each other long and thoroughly. Your intimacy is in its very bloom and freshness."

"There's something in that," replied David. "But, then, people always laugh at the idea of love at first sight."

"And I can make a jest of it too; but do not suppose I should be the less likely to avail myself of a pretty girl's spontaneous affection, with such a treasure offered to me. No, no; but, nevertheless, I'll sing you a song on the subject;" and, arranging his guitar, he sang as follows:—

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

I.

Oh there's nought in the wide world like love at first sight,
I've said it—I've sung it—and am I not right?
Oh, yes, and I'll prove it. I happened to note
Last night on the river a beautiful boat:
A maid *sat* within it—how paint what I feel?
I saw her jet ringlets—I saw her *profile*!
I knelt on the bank—I was wild with delight!
Oh! there's nought in the wide world like love at first sight.

II.

This morning I sought her,—I stated the case;
She *rose* to receive me,—I saw her *full face*!

She look'd all the love that *one* eye can express,—
 She couldn't do *more* and she didn't do *less*;
 And, oh, when I call'd her, she limpingly came,
 Just as if, little darling! she *hadn't been lame*!
 Her ringlets were false, she was four feet in height:
 Oh, there's nought in the wide world like love at first sight.

"That's pretty encouragement for me," said David when the song was over.

"Nay, it cannot apply to your case, for you have had the gift of *second sight* already. She loved last night, and had not changed her mind this morning! A rare virtue *that* in woman!"

"True; then you think I had better go to dinner?"

"Go! of course; and tread on her toe under the table all dinner-time."

"Don't say so," said David.

"But, stop!" cried Lomax, "you must not go that figure. Here, Sam, take Mr. Dumps to my room, and dress him as you dress me: send for the hair-dresser, and a bouquet of moss-roses. "Go, go!" added he, turning to David, who was about to expostulate; "you have only twenty minutes;" and he without further ceremony was hurried to Lomax's dressing-room, where Sam and the *coiffeur* went through their evolutions.

The intelligent reader is already in the secret of Miss Titterton's astonishment at Mr. Dumps's morning call in Cambray Place; we cannot therefore attempt a mystery, or pretend that the broad laugh with which she received him at the dinner-hour in his smart array was in reality nothing more than a smile of encouragement. But though she did laugh, she was really vexed at having so far misled an inoffensive man; and when she accepted his moss roses and put them in water, she was grieved to think of the disappointment which was in store for him. She talked, and laughed, and played, and sang, and still postponed the awkward explanation which she felt it her duty sooner or later to make; and he walked home about eleven o'clock, very much pleased with Clara, and thinking himself really, *after all*, a very fortunate person.

But then, though somewhat softened by time and dis-

tance, would recur the memory of his crime. Ought a man so circumstanced to think of marriage? He had often heard that murder sooner or later would *out*; ten years might elapse in seeming security, but *then* it might be revealed with tenfold horror, for a wretched wife might be doomed to see him hung. Shuddering at the idea, he went to bed, and dreamed that at the moment a reverend gentleman was uniting him to Miss Titterton, and tying what is called the hymeneal knot, the image of Rebecca the avenger rushed between them, transferring the noose to his neck, and hoisting him to the highest beam in the church!

But the next day David again basked in the sunshine of Clara's laugh; and though night ever brought with it harassing dreams, or waking terrors that were infinitely worse, the intimacy with the Tittertons increased, and Clara still delayed the final explanation.

David, satisfied that he was himself preferred, lost, when alone with the fair object who so favoured him, much of that awkwardness and bashful reserve which had always elsewhere obscured his good qualities. Grateful to her for a partiality which was to himself astonishing, he began to love her as he had never before loved any human being; and though always serious, and frequently abstracted, he seemed to enjoy her society.

Clara was, as we have already stated, beyond that first heyday of girlhood when a perfect Adonis alone is to become an accepted lover. She had endured many disappointments, and now and then seriously asked herself, laughing all the time, whether it was possible she could ever die an old maid. A time there was when the idea of her marrying such a man as David would have been treated by her with contempt: *now* she laughed at the notion, 'tis true, but every day it dwelt longer and longer in her imagination, and she sometimes caught herself debating the advantages and disadvantages of such a step.

Thus did a whole month slip away. David became every day less awkward in her eyes; and, could she get him to explain the cause of his frequent sadness and abstraction—could she induce him to forget both, she

really thought that she could eventually make up her mind to love, honour, and obey him!

Daily she became more accustomed to his attentions, and daily he felt himself more at home in the house of her father. On one occasion, having dined at the hotel, he came early to spend the evening in Cambray Place; and though asked by the servant whether he would not "join the gentlemen" in the dining-parlour, he preferred ascending to the drawing-room, where he was pretty sure of finding Miss Clara seated at her embroidery, and ready to receive him with a laugh.

"But you are not alone to-day," said David after the usual compliments of the evening.

"Oh! you've found that out already, have you?" replied his laughing love. "Well, I suppose you are full of curiosity!"

"May I ask who is below with your father?"

"It is somebody I love very much."

"Indeed!" said her admirer.

"Yes, and somebody who loves *me* very much."

"Really!" ejaculated David.

"And reciprocity, you know, is every thing."

"Is it any body I know?"

"Certainly not; it is a very excellent kind old uncle of mine, who has come to Cheltenham to see us, because silly people told him there was a great deal going on which he ought to take cognizance of."

"Oh!" said David with an expression of satisfaction.

"But here he comes!" cried Clara; and as the door opened and an elderly gentleman entered, she added, "Mr. Dumps, I must introduce you to my uncle, Mr. Mildmay."

David uttered an exclamation of surprise and sank back in his chair insensible; for before him stood the Mr. Mildmay he had met at Arras, and to whom he had refused to give an assurance of his innocence.

When Mr. Dumps recovered his faculties, he found himself alone with Mr. Mildmay, who was sitting opposite to him, just as he used to do at the prison at Arras, and fixing upon him the penetrating eyes which were then so much dreaded.

"It is no dream, then!" exclaimed David.

"It is indeed a painful reality," said Mr. Mildmay.

"Have you any thing to communicate to me?"

"Have you any thing to ask?"

"I need not remind you of our former meeting: all that then passed is evidently deeply impressed upon your mind."

"I was innocent of the charge brought against me."

"Yes; but before you were aware of the precise nature of that charge, you refused to assert that you were innocent: you also evidently dreaded the approach of some witness, and had some crime on your conscience of which you feared the disclosure!"

David covered his face with his hands and was silent.

Mr. Mildmay again addressed him.

"When we last parted, I saw that there was mystery about you; but as I had no clue to your crime, whatever it might be—as I had no charge to make against you, I left you to the mercy of the justice of Providence. But now that I find you domesticated in the house of my brother-in-law, associating on terms of intimacy with my niece, I tell you frankly that I must and will investigate your character and conduct, and that your remaining one hour more here depends on your giving me a full explanation."

"To-morrow," said the man of mystery—"perhaps—to-morrow."

"Be it so," replied Mr. Mildmay, rising; "and I trust your detail will be so satisfactory that we shall for ever after be friends."

David prepared to depart, for Mr. Mildmay had already rung the bell as a hint that his absence was expected; but at its sound Clara entered the room and advanced towards her admirer, holding out her hand. There was no laugh upon her features; indeed her eyes looked as if she had been crying.

"You are going," said she: "shake hands with me, and let it be a token on my part that I believe you innocent, and on yours that you appreciate my good opinion and will prove yourself worthy of it. Come, do not be cast down: I have long seen that some secret has de-

pressed your spirits; tell all frankly to my uncle, and you will be happier, and I shall be happier too if I see you so."

David could not reply; but he took her hand, pressed it to his lips, and hurried from the house.

"I hope I did not say too much," said Clara to her uncle as soon as he was gone.

"No, my love: under the circumstances, I should have wondered had you said less."

"Nor did I say it too kindly?—I hope not."

"No," said her uncle, kissing her.

"Well, one thing is very plain," said Clara, sitting down, and half laughing, half crying.

"What is that, pray?"

"That I am never to marry. This is the way every little matrimonial glimmering has been prematurely extinguished."

"Well, we will hope that this will burn brightly again to-morrow," replied her uncle.

"You know best how far that is probable. And now pray do tell me the history of your former meeting with Mr. Dumps."

Mr. Mildmay briefly but distinctly told her in what situation he had met Mr. Dumps at Arras, and all that befel him there; and Clara, though she occasionally laughed at his dilemma, acknowledged with a sigh that there was something very suspicious about his dread that *something* would be discovered, and that *somebody* would bear witness against him.

"Who, in the name of goodness, could Rebecca be, I wonder!" said Clara; "Rebecca the avenger!"

"It is quite impossible for me to guess; and as you must remain equally in the dark until to-morrow, let me light your candle for you, and wish you good-night."

"But where is papa?"

"Gone to bed: you know," said Mr. Mildmay, "he always goes to bed when there's any thing disagreeable going on in the house."

"True," said Clara, laughing; "I forgot that. Do you know, I think it's a very good plan. Good-night," she added, kissing him.

"Good-night! and may we be happy to-morrow!"

The uncle and niece then separated.

But many hours elapsed ere the light was extinguished in Clara's room. What could he have done! Again and again she asked herself the question, but without arriving one atom nearer the solution of the mystery. He was not the sort of man to do a rash and desperate act; but then it was possible that his peculiar manner had been assumed, and for the very purpose of escaping detection. She had heard of such things, had read of them in novels, and seen them in melodramas. "The Miller and his Men," thought she, "were they not *all* robbers? and did they not *all* assume a peaceful, homely exterior that they might the better carry on their horrid trade?"

Clara slept little that night, and at an early hour she awaited the presence of her father and uncle in the breakfast-room. The meal was despatched more hastily than usual; and then Mr. Mildmay gave orders that when Mr. Dumps called, he was to be shown up to him in the drawing-room.

Twelve o'clock passed—one, two! still it seemed undignified in any of the young lady's family to go in quest of the absentee.

Three o'clock struck; and then Clara, unable any longer to endure her suspense, came to her uncle, entreating him to call at the Plough hotel.

"Something must have happened," said she; "he would have written, at all events, had he been well: but you know how the sight of you agitated him—I am quite sure he is seriously indisposed." And she laughed, or *affected* to laugh, as she added, "You'll find that poor face of his in a night-cap, and he ejaculating my name in the ravings of fever. For God's sake, go, dearest uncle," she added earnestly, "and come back and tell me the worst."

Mr. Mildmay could not refuse to comply with her wishes; he walked to the Plough hotel, and on inquiring for Mr. Dumps, was informed by the waiter that he had left Cheltenham by the London mail the night before!

"Gone!" said Mr. Mildmay; "and did he leave no letter, no message?"

"No, sir, nothing."

"The unprincipled scoundrel!" said Mr. Mildmay, and walked back to make known the result of his inquiry.

CHAPTER XIX.

Six weeks after the events narrated in the last chapter, we find Mr. Dumps lodging in a second floor in Arundel-street, Strand. However imaginary or really trivial many of his former distresses had been, it must be admitted that he was now involved in a good substantial trouble.

Separated from the woman he loved—from the woman, too, who had so long tolerated his attentions, and she the niece of one among the few men living who could bear witness against him, (not, indeed, to the *nature* of the crime, but that there actually was a crime,)—is it to be wondered at that he sat in his chamber in utter despair, and longed to run down to the end of the street, to throw himself over the parapet, and drown himself in the Thames?

He was without any pursuit, without any object in life; memory brought back the past stained with crime and blood; and to him the future was a blank, hopeless! comfortless! He had shot a fellow-creature in solitary single combat, contrary to all law, without seconds or witnesses of any kind. There were, indeed, two witnesses that such a crime had been committed by him; was it not, then, wiser and better to deliver himself up to justice at once, rather than go on for ever trembling at shadows?

The people at David's lodgings did not profess to cook for him, and about six o'clock, feeling exceedingly hungry, he wandered forth in search of a dinner. Poor human nature!—thus it is! We talk of all-consuming sorrow, devouring grief, gnawing pains, and anguish that cuts into our very vitals; and then we take a long breath, wipe our eyes, sit down to table, unfold our nap-

kin, take the carving-knife and fork, pick and choose the choice little bits that please us best, sip sherry, take one glass of port, and finish with a bottle of claret. Then, unless we have overdone it, and ate too much, we feel a great deal better, and don't have a relapse until next morning.

David, in the midst of his sorrows, which for the last hour had been considerably aggravated by hunger, went to a well-known dining-house, called the Albion Hotel, situated close to Drury-lane theatre. In the large coffee-room, which still, after the fashion of the olden time, is divided into boxes, may be found men of all grades and professions; and there, in the box immediately opposite to the stove, David encountered his old acquaintance Captain Kilkenny.

It was not likely that Kilkenny ever could forget one of the heroes of the Boulogne tragedy, especially as he had visited him on the part of Mr. O'Flaney respecting his farcical feat of the previous night, and had also borne him from the scene of bloodshed, and seen him safe on board the Waterwagtail. He recognised him the moment he entered, hailed him uncereemoniously, and made him enter his box and join him in the repast which was preparing.

"And how many men have you murdered since we last met?" said Kilkenny in a tone of voice calculated to startle the peaceable inmates of the coffee-room, and to make David anticipate the speedy entrance of the officers of justice.

"Hush, for goodness' sake!" said David. "I have as yet escaped detection."

"Dear me! I of course thought you had been hung long ago!" cried his tormentor, laughing, and in as loud a key as before.

"But now, pray, do be serious, and, above all, speak low. When you left me, what happened on your return to—to—"

"To the scene of blood," whispered Kilkenny.

"Pray, be serious, and relieve my mind. You found—?"

"Nothing!" said Kilkenny with mock solemnity.

"Nothing!"

"Nothing,—and, what was more strange, no *body*! The ground was much saturated with blood—"

David groaned.

"But the corpse had disappeared!"

"And what did you do?" gasped David.

"Why," replied Kilkenny, "I thought, unless I was questioned, the wisest thing was to say nothing about it. I heard a great deal about the mysterious disappearance of that fellow,—what was his name?"

"Arden,—Mr. George Arden."

"Yes, yes, Arden,—for he was in debt all over the town. But, as you may well suppose, taking into consideration the last glimpse you had of him, he never walked back into Boulogne to pay his bills. Having rather in a hurried way paid the last debt of nature, I suppose he considered that all the other little items were cancelled."

"And Miss Tatum?"

"Who the devil's Miss Tatum?"

"Why," said David, "the young lady in black."

"Oh! I know,—spectatress of the fight. Like myself, she seemed to wish to keep her own counsel; for next day, when I met her walking with a hobbling old man—"

"Her father."

"Very probable,—she looked me full in the face with a sort of *never-saw-you-before* expression."

"And what did you say?"

"Nothing."

"Then you don't know what became of the body?"

"No;—unless, indeed, Miss Tatum dragged it to the edge of the cliffs, and threw it into the sea."

"You don't mean *that*?"

"Well, then, I suppose some friend or relative smuggled it off to Calais, embalmed him, and embarked him, and went with him to Dover."

"Perhaps," said David, "he did not die immediately."

"If so, it is the more probable that he was carried off to Calais, there to breathe his last; for, after the fearful

effusion of blood we witnessed, recovery was not to be thought of."

"You think not?" said David, his last lingering hope departing.

"Think not! I'm sure of it.—But here comes our dinner, and also my old friend Commodore Cockle, who promised to meet me here, and is always punctual as clockwork. Here, Cockle,—I need not introduce this gentleman, Mr. Dumps, he you smuggled off from Boulogne, that day that you cheated the hangman of his due."

"Pray, don't talk so loud," said David, at the same time shaking hands with Mr. Cockle, who received him cordially, notwithstanding Kilkenny's remarks.

"Hush, you silly fellow!" said he; "they don't hang in France."

"No!" said Kilkenny. "Well, well, that accounts for our having Mr. Dumps's company to-day."

"But, by-the-by," exclaimed Cockle, "Lomax wrote me word two or three months ago that you were in Cheltenham."

"I *was* there," replied David.

"But since that, he wrote again, and told me an awkward story,—some like scrape that you were involved in."

"Oh ho!" cried Kilkenny; "another awkward story!"

"What did he say?" inquired David.

"Faith, I hardly know;—something about love at first sight; ending in desertion of the lady; and, moreover, a rumour that a certain uncle knew more of your past conduct than was quite convenient."

"By heaven!" said David, "it seems my fate always to excite suspicion; but I assure you on my honour that I am innocent."

"What did you say?" interrupted Kilkenny, with a very peculiar expression of countenance.

"I say that my intentions have never been bad; and when involved in equivocal situations, it has been through no intentional error of my own."

"Will you excuse me for saying that it appears to me there has been always a want of frankness and candour about you?" said Mr. Cockle. "Perhaps you wanted courage to state the facts as they occurred; but, at all events, I suspect that to no one human being have you ever yet told the truth."

"Oh!" cried Kilkenny, laughing heartily, "that beats I said to him about hanging."

"Do not misunderstand me, Mr. Dumps," continued Cockle seriously. "I do not mean that the vice of lying is habitual to you: I merely say that, having an awkward story to tell about yourself, you never frankly and honestly told it; and therefore, having been driven to concealment and equivocation, you have made matters worse, and continually involved yourself in mystery."

"Why, that is very like what you used to say of me," said Kilkenny.

"Very true," replied Cockle; "and now, our filberts and port and sherry being on the table, I have a great deal to tell Mr. Dumps a story for his future edification.

"It was at a public school that I first became acquainted with my friend Bob. He was then a little round-faced curly-pated boy, about ten years of age; and I being two years his senior, and there existing some intimacy between our parents, he was put under my protection.

"Bob had been a spoiled child, and until his tenth year the world had been to him a world of pies and puddings, of comforts and comforts. His *will* had been the regulator of the paternal mansion, and his pleasure the main object promoted by his mother. All this ended when (that is, as far as the young gentleman's residence at home was concerned,) in those roots of all evil, idleness and ignorance; and some rash and glaring acts of insubordination having brought upon Bob's head the wrath of his father, (*whose head*, by-the-by, was more in error than his son's,) the young reprobate had suddenly decided to quit, and, in spite of the threats, entreaties, and sternness of his mother, he was immediately borne off to the academic shades superintended by the Reverend Doctor Rearpepper,

"I soon, fool that I was! became very fond of Bob. We naturally get attached to those who cling to us for support; and every thing was so new to him, poor fellow! that without me he was miserable.

"At that very early age, Bob had acquired a taste for extravagance; his money always burnt a hole in his little breeches' pocket; and when it was gone, many a shilling did he borrow of me, and many more did he owe to Mrs. Puffy, the fat vender of pastry, whose residence was 'down the street.'

"These premature extravagances, petty as they certainly were, of course led to little difficulties: and perhaps the worst result likely to arise from early embarrassments is, the habit of fibbing, and making a mystery and concealment of troubles which nothing but candour could really remedy. And thus it was with Bob: had I not loved him and been a real friend, he would have forfeited my friendship a hundred times; so often did he borrow, so often did he promise repayment, and so often did he forget to fulfil the promises he voluntarily made. But no, I wrong him—he did *not* forget; I always saw that he felt infinitely more annoyed than I did when he stood before me a defaulter, and his flushed cheek and moistened eyes proved that he endured humiliation, and that he, *at heart*, was even then *my honourable friend*.

"Are there sweets in jam pies that can atone for subsequent humiliations like these? I should have thought not; but poor Bob still ran *down the street*, and *outran* his pocket-money!

"At sixteen I left Doctor Rearpepper's establishment; and many were the tears that poor Bob shed at my departure. He said nothing at all about the nine shillings and fourpence halfpenny that he owed me; but when I said, 'Bob, be sure you write to me,' I suspect that he almost expected me to add, 'and don't forget to enclose the money.'

"During my residence at Oxford we never met. At first our interchange of letters was frequent, and the style of our communications most affectionate; but gradually our correspondence flagged, and for a whole year I heard nothing of him. At length, by the coach came

a splendidly bound copy of a work which he knew to be my favourite; and in the title-page was written my name, and underneath the words, 'From his affectionate and grateful friend Bob.'

" 'Yes,' thought I, as I read the inscription, 'and still thou art my honourable friend!'

" Bob, after so long a period had elapsed, was naturally ashamed to send me the few shillings that he owed me; but he could not be happy till he had spent many pounds on a gift which was intended to repay me. With the parcel I received a letter announcing his having entered the army, and adding that he was about to join his regiment, which was then on a foreign station. He entreated me not to suppose from his long silence that he had forgotten me; and, in short, there was so much warmth of heart about the whole letter, that Bob was reinstated in my good graces, and I wrote him a most affectionate reply, assuring him that whenever we met he would find me unaltered.

" After quitting Oxford, I travelled on the Continent for many months; and on my return to England, I found my friend Bob at a hotel in Bond Street, and, in every sense of the words, 'a gay man about town.'

" Ours was more like the reunion of boys after a summer's vacation, than the meeting of men who had seen something of the world. We could talk only of the past, of frolic and of fun; and while arm-in-arm we ranged the streets of the west end, we laughed almost as much, and were really nearly as thoughtless, as in the days when together we ranged the play-ground of old Rearpepper.

" Whatever I may have been, Bob was indeed unchanged; and not alone in spirits and temper, for I soon found that his old habits had grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength. He still retained his 'sweet tooth,' and daily did he lead me into Gunter's or Grange's, (nay, often into both in turn,) and there I saw him indulge as he used of old in the habitation of Mrs. Puffy;—the only difference was, that his dainties were somewhat more refined, and more expensive; for, alas! I soon saw the old injunction, 'Put it down to my bill,' had by no means fallen into disuse. All other tradespeople were most impartially *dealt with* by Bob in the

same way; and I saw him take possession of trinkets, coats, hats, and boots, without considering it requisite to take his purse out of his pocket.

"Now I knew that Bob would eventually, in all probability, be exceedingly well off; but I greatly doubted his having it *then* in his power to pay for one-fourth of the valuable articles which I saw him so unceremoniously take possession of. I one day ventured to speak to him on the subject; and from his embarrassed manner, and the deepened colour on his cheek, I saw that he felt the truth of what I said: but I soon found that with the old error, he still retained the old habit of fibbing to endeavour to conceal it; and the consequence was, that we spent our evening together with much more reserve than usual.

"The next morning I forgot all that had passed; for Bob ran to my bedside to inform me that he was ordered to India, and must leave London in a day or two. He showed me his letters, and it was evident that he must prepare for his immediate departure.

"We breakfasted together; and during the repast, the waiter was continually presenting him with wafered notes; and it appeared that several persons had called, very earnestly wishing to see him. I had my suspicions about these visitations, but said nothing.

"Immediately after breakfast, Bob took my arm and requested me to walk with him; and after passing through several streets and squares in unusual silence, and with an appearance of agitation in his manner, he suddenly addressed me.

"‘There is no alternative,’ said he; ‘I must go.’

"‘You must, indeed, Bob,’ I replied,—‘unless you are *detained*.’

"‘Detained!’ said Bob, blushing; ‘how do you mean?’

"‘Pardon me,’ I answered, ‘but really few young men could go on as you have lately done, and be prepared for a departure so sudden. Now, my dear Bob, you know what my finances are; you know I have literally *nothing* to spare: but if, knowing this, you think I can be of temporary use to you, command me.’

"Bob grasped my arm, and his eyes watered; but he

was ashamed to own the extent of his encumbrances, and therefore hastily answered,

“ ‘ This is like yourself, my dear friend, and at the moment you may indeed serve me by putting your name to a bill.’

“ ‘ Not of large amount, Bob, I trust ?’

“ ‘ No—yes—larger, I fear, than—’

“ ‘ If it be a large sum, Bob, you know that if your draft is not honoured when it becomes due, *I* shall go to prison instead of *you*.’

“ ‘ Never !’ said Bob with a fervour and an evidence of deep feeling which I could not distrust.

“ ‘ Well, then, what is the sum ?’ said I.

“ ‘ First, let me tell you some circumstances which press heavily on my heart,’ said Bob ; ‘ not here—come with me this way.’

“ And in solemn silence he led me to Portman Square.

“ ‘ What can all this mean ?’ said I at last.

“ ‘ Hush !’ said Bob ; ‘ you see that house ?’

“ And he pointed to a very handsome well-appointed mansion. A footman was standing at the door receiving cards from a lady in a carriage.

“ ‘ See the house ?’ I replied ; ‘ to be sure I do ; and what then ?’

“ ‘ That house is owned by one of the wealthiest commoners in England.’

“ ‘ Umph !’ said I ; ‘ the owner, I suppose, is rich.’

“ ‘ He has an only daughter,’ said Bob.

“ ‘ Has he ?’ I answered.

“ ‘ His sole heiress,’ added Bob.

“ ‘ What then ?’ I replied.

“ ‘ I am ashamed of having concealed all this so long from so dear a friend,’ murmured Bob.

“ ‘ All what ?’

“ ‘ But the secret was not my own.’

“ ‘ What secret ?’

“ ‘ That lovely girl !’

“ ‘ Upon my word, Bob,’ I cried, ‘ you put me out of all patience !’

“ ‘ I have won that girl’s affections.’

“ ‘ The heiress ?’ said I.

"She loves me," whispered Bob.

"My dear fellow," I exclaimed, "this is news indeed!—you have no occasion of assistance from a party fellow like me."

"Oh," said Bob, "you have not heard all. She loves me to madness, your dear girl! But, rich as her father is, were he to suppose that I am involved, he would forbid the match."

"A very sensible old man."

"That may be: but there is another obstacle—my rank: Clara will not consent to marry any thing below a captain."

"I could not repress a laugh."

"It is a foible, perhaps," said Bob, rather puffed; "but it is her only one, and I must humour it. But my promotion depends on my going to India, and—"

"Well, well," said I, "I understand all this; but tell me at once what you wish me to do for you."

"To put your name to a draft for one hundred and ninety pounds," faltered Bob.

"Mercy on me! what a sum!" said I. "However, it must be done: and when the draft becomes due—"

"I will honourably pay it!"

"If not, to prison I go. And now let us return to our hotel."

"One moment," said Bob: "I love to look at the house."

"At the casket which contains the gem?" said I.

"Yes; and for *your* sake, too, I love to look at it. You see those three windows shaded with sky-blue silk curtains? Oh, *such* a little room *that* is!—and that room I always mean to be your own *exclusively*, when I am master of the mansion. Such a room!—the furniture so exquisite!—and such a sweet look out over the square!—But come, we'll talk all that over while we are at dinner."

"Before the meal was half finished, Bob seemed quite to have recovered his spirits; and I could not help suspecting, that as the prospect of an immediate separation did not seem to depress him, he loved the lady less than he loved her gold."

" 'Is she pretty?' said I after a long pause, during which I at least had been thinking of her.

" 'Who?' said Bob, starting.

" 'I say, is the lady pretty?'

" 'What lady?' said Bob.

" 'Why, your love, to be sure.'

" 'Which do you mean?'

" 'Nonsense, Bob!—I mean the girl you are attached to;—why, man, she who lives in Portman Square.'

" 'Oh! what *was* I dreaming of!—*very* pretty.'

" 'I can't imagine, Bob,' said I, 'when you contrived to win your divinity: you and I have been for months almost inseparable, and——'

" 'Ask no questions,' said Bob: 'the secret is not my own.'

" 'Not entirely, certainly,' I replied. 'Is she to inherit the house in Portman Square?'

" 'To be sure she is: and *such* a house as it is!—and that room which I mean for you! You are fond of a hot bath?'

" 'Very.'

" 'There is a sky-blue silk sofa in that room; and when you touch a spring, it flies up, (I don't exactly know the principle on which it acts,) and turns into the most delightful bath!'

" 'Indeed!'

" 'Yes, a marble bath.'

" 'Marble?'

" 'White marble without a speck;—she *did* tell me where it came from,—but that's no consequence.'

" 'How very luxurious!' said I.

" 'Yes; and so very complete!—three cocks!'

" 'Three!' said I: 'two, you mean.'

" 'No, no,—three,' replied Bob: 'one for hot water—'

" 'Yes,' said I.

" 'And one for cold—'

" 'Well, that makes *two*,' said I.

" 'And one,' said Bob, 'for *eau-de-Cologne*.'

" In the evening I put my name to Bob's draft; and the next morning we parted with mutual expressions of regret.

"I missed him sadly; and it so happened, that after he went, many untoward circumstances occurred which, having first materially lowered my resources, next effectually lowered my spirits, and I used to saunter through our old haunts looking like the ghost of his companion.

"When he was gone, I became acquainted with many circumstances connected with his expenditure which perfectly astounded me; and at the end of four months, (exactly two months before it was to become due,) I had every reason to doubt whether the draft for one hundred and ninety pounds would ever be paid.

"I was conscious of my own utter inability to pay it; and I therefore existed for a week or two in a state of mental excitement not to be described. One day after breakfast, I sallied forth more dolorous than usual; and after wandering about for some time, I found myself in Portman Square, opposite the identical mansion inhabited by Bob's intended.

"'Ah!' thought I, 'were Bob now in possession of that house all would go well with us:—his heart is in the right place, poor fellow! But, alas! before he puts me in possession of that sky-blue apartment, with the hot water and the cold, and the *eau-de-Cologne*, I may be in prison, and my name disgraced!'

"As I looked towards the balcony of the drawing-room, I saw a female watering some geraniums; and, suddenly turning her head towards me, she seemed to recognise my person, and gave me a familiar nod.

"I soon discovered it was my old friend and near connexion Mrs. Symmons; and, beckoning me to the window, she exclaimed,

"'Oh! I'm delighted to see you!—we only came to town yesterday,—we are on a visit to Mr. Molesworth: pray come in, and I'll introduce you.'

"I knocked at the hall-door in a state of mind not to be described,—the hall-door of a house in which I (*by anticipation*,) already possessed a room of my own, with sky-blue curtains, and a new-invented spring sofa bath overflowing with *eau-de-Cologne*! I walked up stairs; and my friend Mrs. Symmons introduced me to Mr. Molesworth (an old gentleman in a pair of gouty shoes,)

his daughter Miss Molesworth (a lovely, fair-haired girl of about eighteen,) *her sister Flora* (still in a pinafore, and not *come out*,) and *her two little brothers* (school-boys in round jackets and duck trousers.)

"‘Dear me!’ thought I, ‘how poor dear Bob was mistaken in supposing her an heiress!’

"In this family I spent many happy days; and being, though unknown to her, so well acquainted with the secret of the young lady’s heart, I became more intimate with her than I could have been with any one else, without incurring the imputation of ‘serious intentions.’ In this instance, however, my knowledge of the fair lady’s engagement to another person (and that person my friend,) made me feel perfectly at my ease; and we became the talk of all our acquaintances, without my being the least aware that we were engaged even in a little flirtation.

"To my utter astonishment, Mrs. Symmons came to me one day, (it was the day before that on which Bob’s draft was to become due,) and, with a knowing look, asked me why I was so out of spirits? I gave an evasive reply, for I did not choose to own the paltry pecuniary difficulty which was threatening to overpower me.

"‘Nonsense!’ said Mrs. Symmons; ‘go boldly, and make your offer: your connexions are unexceptionable; and whatever your present income may be, your prospects are excellent. Besides, *she* has enough for both; for, though not an only child, her father can afford to give her a very excellent fortune.’

"‘And pray,’ I replied, ‘of what lady are you talking?’

"‘Miss Molesworth, to be sure;—I *know* she is attached to you.’

"‘You know nothing about the matter,’ said I; ‘for I can tell *you* that——’

"I hesitated, for I had no right to betray Bob’s secret.

"‘Well,’ said Mrs. Symmons, ‘here she comes, and I will leave you together;’ and away she went.

"‘What is the matter?’ said Miss Molesworth earnestly as she entered; ‘you seem agitated—what has happened?’

"‘Are we alone?’ said I after a pause. ‘It is better that I should be explicit.’

"Miss Molesworth started, coloured, and cast down her eyes. Had I been a favoured lover on the point of making an avowal of attachment, she could not have been more embarrassed.

"Do not be alarmed," said I: "I know all!"

"Sir!" said Miss Molesworth.

"I am Bob's best friend, and I know your secret."

"My secret!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, dear lady," I answered: "I am, as I told you before, the most intimate friend of Bob."

"Of Bob!" said she.

"Yes," I replied, taking her hand; "I am Bob's school-fellow."

"And pray, sir," said she, withdrawing her hand, "who is Bob?"

"Do not distress yourself," I whispered; "do not think it necessary to conceal any thing from me;—before he left England, Bob told me all."

"All *what*?" cried Miss Molesworth.

"Your mutual attachment,—your engagement," I replied.

"Miss Molesworth started up, colouring crimson. At first she could not articulate, but at last she said,

"I know not, sir, to what I am to attribute this conduct: I have been attached to *no one*, engaged to *no one*,—I know not of whom you speak. I had considered you, sir, in the light of a friend; but now, sir, now—"

"She could say no more, but sank on a chair beside me in a flood of tears.

"A mist at that moment fell from my eyes; I saw at once the full extent of Bob's unpardonable falsehood, and the distressing certainty flashed upon my mind that his draft would be dishonoured.

"Mrs. Symmons entered at the moment, and found us both apparently plunged into the depths of despair. Miss Molesworth was in an instant weeping on her shoulder; and before a quarter of an hour had elapsed, I found myself breathing forth vows of love to the young lady, and exulting in my discovery that her engagement to my friend Bob was a fable.

"Miss Molesworth referred me to her father; but I read in her large blue eyes that she did *not* dislike me.

I therefore retired to my bed that night full of love and hope, and dreamed of driving my wife in a chariot drawn by six dragons over the mangled body of Bob.

"The next morning my first thought was of my approaching interview with Mr. Molesworth: but, alas! it was soon followed by my recollection of Bob's draft, and the too great probability that before night I should be in durance vile for the amount. My own resources were at the moment inadequate to meet the demand; and could I ask a rich man to let me marry his daughter, and expect that his first act would be to pay one hundred and ninety pounds to extricate me from a prison!

"At length I made up my mind to walk to Bob's bankers, and at once ascertain the worst. I did so, and on my arrival was astounded at being informed by the clerk that he had provided funds for the payment of the draft!

"So far I had wronged my honourable friend; and I was therefore able to appear in Portman Square in excellent spirits.

"The course of my 'true love' did, for a wonder, 'run smooth,' and, all our preliminaries having been finally arranged, the Molesworths left town for the family seat in Wiltshire, and I remained to arrange some legal and other matters, which would in all probability detain me for a couple of months. I was sitting in my own room rather out of spirits the morning after my true love's departure, when the door opened, and in came —Bob! He was so evidently delighted to see me again, that I could not help receiving him kindly. He spoke of the obligation I had conferred on him previous to his departure; and after frankly acknowledging the gratification I had felt at his punctuality, I said,

"But how is this? returned after so short an absence!"

"Oh! we are not to go to India, after all; 'I've been no further than Madeira;—we'll talk that all over another time. I suppose I shall be sent to the West, instead of the East.'

"I only regret it on account of your rank; it may retard your marriage.'

“ ‘My marriage!’ said Bob, blushing all over,

“ ‘Yes; your marriage with the heiress of Portman Square.’

“ ‘Oh!’ cried Bob, starting from his chair and pressing his hand, ‘never—never, I entreat you, mention that subject again.’

“ ‘Why so?’ said I.

“ ‘It is all off,’ sighed Bob.

“ ‘Off!’ I exclaimed.

“ ‘Yes, the traitress!—But enough,—never name her to me again.’

“ I of course promised to obey him, and for some days we enjoyed ourselves very much in the old way. One morning he came to me in real distress, and told me that his tailor had threatened to arrest him for the amount of his bill. I offered to go and speak to the man, and endeavour to persuade him to give Bob time.

“ ‘If he will only give me a month,’ said Bob.

“ ‘Well,’ I cried, ‘I can but try him;’ and away I went.

“ The tailor was inexorable; but he told me that if I would become responsible for the payment of the debt in a month, he would consent to wait; if not, he was determined to arrest Bob that day.

“ I hesitated for a moment; but, recollecting his prompt payment of the hundred and ninety pounds, I made myself responsible for the amount of the bill, and then returned to congratulate my friend.

“ When I told him what I had done, he started up and exclaimed, ‘You do not mean it!—you cannot have made yourself responsible for the amount of that fellow’s bill!’

“ ‘I have, I assure you,’ said I.

“ ‘Then,’ said Bob, ‘*you* will have to pay it; I shall not have the money myself; I never asked you to incur the responsibility,—I never expected it,—and I repeat that you will have to pay it.’

“ ‘My dear Bob,’ said I, ‘it will not be in my power; I am peculiarly situated. At the end of a month I shall be most particularly engaged—my hands, as it were, will be *tied*, and paying this at that particular period will be out of the question.’

"Still Bob persisted that he never asked me to become responsible, and it ended in his leaving me in a very ill humour. My engagements with legal persons employed me for days together in the City, and I saw very little of Bob. When we did meet, my manner was cold and constrained; and it was not till within a day or two of the expiration of the month that I had time to think of the very inopportune and annoying responsibility which I had incurred.

"That very day I met Bob, and spoke to him most earnestly and seriously about the payment; but he sighed most deeply, told me how much he lamented my having engaged to make the payment, and pathetically bemoaned the emptiness of his own pockets. The next morning I called on the tailor, earnestly requesting him to renew the draft for another month, and was then told that my honourable friend had called that very day, and had placed in his hands the sum for which I was responsible!

"I went instantly to call upon him, and he received me with laughter, in which I could not resist joining; but I confess I laughed the more from the recollection that my hour of revenge was at hand.

"About a fortnight afterwards, (the family of my intended having arrived in town for the wedding, which was to take place the next morning at St. George's Church, Hanover Square,) Bob inquired '*what* it was that seemed to occupy me from morning till night, and *why* it was that we so seldom met?'

" 'My dear Bob,' said I, 'it has been a secret.'

" 'Oh! a secret!'

" 'Yes; and the secret has not been *entirely* my own.'

" 'Indeed!' said Bob.

" 'But I will *now* conceal nothing from you: you, I remember, before you went away, confided *your* secret to *me*.'

" 'Oh!—ah!—hem—yes—well?' stammered Bob.

" 'I am going to be married to-morrow.'

" 'Married!' exclaimed Bob: 'tell me all about it; who is she,—do I know her?'

" 'You do *not* know her; but I have heard you *speak* of *her*.'

“ ‘Indeed! Where does she live?—is she pretty?—is she rich?’

“ ‘There is no time,’ said I, ‘to answer your questions at present: I dine with the family at six, and I mean to take you with me. Go and dress, and in half an hour I will call for you in a carriage.’

“ ‘Where does your intended live?’ said Bob as we drove along Oxford Street and turned into Orchard Street.

“ ‘Time will show,’ I replied.

“ ‘Where are we now?’ said Bob as the carriage made a sudden turn.

“ ‘We are in Portman Square,’ I replied.

“ ‘And the lady lives—’ faltered Bob.

“ ‘In Portman Square,’ said I.

“ Bob sat in evident confusion; and when the carriage actually stopped at Mr. Molesworth’s house, he said,

“ ‘I deserve this—I am quite ashamed of myself. Come, come, turn back and drive home.’

“ ‘By no means,’ said I as the servant gave a thundering knock at the door, and then let down the steps of the carriage.

“ ‘Look,’ said I, pointing upwards, while we waited for the street-door to be opened; ‘you see those three windows with sky-blue curtains?’

“ ‘Oh! spare me!’ cried Bob.

“ ‘That room I always mean to reserve *exclusively* for you: there is a wonderful sofa, silken without, and marble within.’

“ ‘My dear friend!’ said Bob imploringly.

“ ‘Don’t interrupt me,’ I proceeded;—‘an exquisite bath with three cocks; one for hot water, one for cold, and one for *eau-de-Cologne*. But we have no time now to expatiate on its advantages;’ and I jumped out of the carriage.

“ ‘Why, you *won’t* go in!’ cried Bob as he breathlessly ran up the steps after me and vigorously pulled at the tail of my coat.

“ ‘Go in!’ said I; ‘to be sure: and you will meet old friends, and show me where you used to meet the lady of your love, and—’

" 'You are going too far!' whispered Bob: 'I see my error; I uttered what was false—forgive me—I am cured. But these servants and the inmates of the house will think us mad!'

" 'Not at all,' I replied. 'Speak the truth in future, as I have done to you.'

"I pressed his hand and led him up stairs. I saw that he was depressed and humiliated; and when we got to the drawing-room door, he whispered,

" 'And do *they* know it? I cannot face *them*.'

" 'They know *nothing*,' I replied, 'and shall never know from me any thing discreditable to my honourable friend Bob.'

" 'I will never utter a falsehood again,' said Bob. And I firmly believe he adhered to his resolution."

"He was rightly served," said David.

"I thought you would say so."

"Well, but how does this story apply to *me*? I never invented falsehoods to cover my embarrassments."

"No," said Cockle, "perhaps not; but you never, I suspect, confided the real truth to any one."

"Ha! ha!" cried Kilkenny, "he has you there!"

"Consequently," added Cockle, "you brooded over untoward events until your nerves became morbidly sensitive. Had you told Kilkenny there, or Lomax, or myself, or indeed your lady love, or her uncle, the real honest truth, all might have been smooth with you ere this."

"Mine is a case," said David, "that admits of no amelioration. Your friend Bob was in an annoying situation, doubtless; but there was nothing which might not be forgotten and forgiven, and he had been guilty of nothing worse than a fib. But how did he get on with the Molesworths?"

"Awkwardly enough at first, as you may suppose; but after a little time he got on very well with Miss Molesworth, her sister, and the two little boys."

"But as you always called him Bob," said David, "I wonder it did not occur to Miss Molesworth that he must be *the* Bob of whom you so mysteriously spoke the day you popped the question; for you then named him as your schoolfellow and intimate friend."

"Very true," said Kilkenny; "but then, you know, he of course did not introduce him as *Mr. Bob*."

"Oh no; that did not occur to me," replied David, "and Mr. Cockle did not mention his other name to me."

"Do you know *my* Christian name," inquired Kilkenny.

"No;—I never heard it that I am aware of."

"Well, then, to throw more light on Cockle's story, and bring its moral more home, let me tell you that *my* Christian name is Robert, and that ever since we were schoolboys, Cockle has called *me* Bob."

"*You!*" said Dumps.

"Yes. I trust I am reformed; and I tell *you*, as I have already told Mrs. Cockle, that *I* am the hero of his story. Some weeks after they were married we met again, and then she heard him for the first time address me as Bob. I saw her start, and blush, and look inquiringly at her husband; and, to put an end to all mystery, I put a bold face on the matter, and had the impudence to tell the whole story!"

"You don't say so!" said David!

"Yes," said Mr. Cockle; "and now I am sure that my wife esteems my honourable friend Bob almost as much as I do."

"And now," exclaimed Kilkenny, slapping Mr. Dumps on the shoulder in a way that made him start, "why will not you take courage, and tell us all the particulars of *your* story?"

"It is very late," said David: "to-morrow—"

"To-morrow be it, then. At the same hour we will dine here again." And the trio having separated, David returned rather lightened in spirit to his second floor in Arundel-street.

CHAPTER XX.

CLARA TITTERTON might well say that there seemed to be a fatality against the realisation of any of her visions of love and happiness. It is not to be supposed that a girl of her good sense could seriously lament the

disappearance of Major Dehaney, a man she had met but once, and who at that interview had poured forth his addresses in a state of semi-inebriation. She laughed at herself for her folly in having for one moment allowed such protestations to impose upon her; but no one was aware of her momentary infatuation, therefore no one laughed at her when he so unceremoniously departed.

But Mr. Dumps's equally unexpected flight was a very different affair. His attentions had been seen by her friends and acquaintances for many weeks; and his voluntary desertion caused many rumours, some prejudicial to his own character, some derogatory to poor Clara, and all as far removed from the plain truth as possible.

Mr. Mildmay did all in his power to unravel the mystery; and having inquired at the hotel whether there was any person there with whom Mr. Dumps had been on terms of intimacy, he called upon Mr. Lorimer Lomax, apologising for his intrusion, and requesting that he would throw as much light as possible on the past conduct, adventures, birth, parentage, and education of the mysterious fugitive.

"In a watering-place like Cheltenham," added Mr. Mildmay, "there can be no concealment. You have, of course, heard that this fellow had been paying his addresses to my niece; and, strange as it may seem,—but there is no accounting for ladies' tastes,—she began to like him."

"I wish I could be of real use to you," replied Lomax; "but, though I have been domesticated with him for days on board my cousin's yacht, and though we have often been together here, I really must confess I know very little about him."

"Pray, tell me where you first met him," said Mildmay: and Lomax proceeded to detail the manner in which he was picked up by the Waterwagtail off Boulogne harbour, and subsequently landed at Cherbourg. On comparing dates, it was evident that this occurred immediately before his meeting with Mr. Mildmay at Arras.

"So far we have succeeded in putting together two

links of the chain. It is clear that he must have left Boulogne in haste, and that he was anxious to be conveyed elsewhere as speedily as possible. Boulogne, then, was in all probability the scene of his misdeeds, whatever they may have been."

"I think I know one person who could throw some light on the mystery," replied Lomax,—“an intimate friend of my cousin, at whose request we received him on board the yacht; but he may be bound in honour not to reveal what he knows."

"Will you ask him?"

"I will write by this day's post to Mr. Cockle, requesting him to make the inquiry. I trust Miss Titterton does not let this unpleasant affair prey on her health and spirits."

"Why, fortunately," replied Mr. Mildmay, "she is not one who is easily cast down. I have already seen her laugh at this adventure; but it was a laugh that, I suspect, was assumed to cover disappointment and wounded pride. However, she has agreed to accompany her father and myself to dine with some old friends who are just arrived here; and I trust, having once got her out, she will recover her cheerfulness."

Clara's uncle cordially thanked Lomax for the kindness and consideration with which he had received him; and Lomax, much pleased with the old gentleman, and interested about his niece, was agreeably surprised, when he went out to dinner, to find that the Cambray party and himself had been invited to dine at the same house.

Poor Clara, conscious of the gossip which she had so innocently excited, was nervous and flushed; but the party was a very small one,—the host and hostess, (two much-valued friends,) her father and uncle, and Mr. Lomax. Her female friend, though just arrived at Cheltenham, had already heard that something very annoying had happened, and observing that during dinner she talked and laughed with an evident effort to conceal her mortification, she gave her the signal for departure much earlier than usual, and taking Clara's hand affectionately, led her to the drawing-room.

"And now," said she, seating Clara in an arm-chair,

and taking a low stool by her side, "do tell me, my dear girl, what is all this nonsense which I have heard about you and some false swain?"

"Oh!" said Clara, laughing, "so well does it deserve the name of nonsense, that it is not worth talking about."

"I should agree with you there, Clary, did I not see that you are hurt and annoyed?"

"Well," said Clara, "I will own that it *was* mortifying—and so ridiculous!"

"Now don't laugh, but seriously tell me about it."

"I have nothing to tell but what I dare say you have already heard."

"I have only heard that some person, whom every body wonders you *could* like, paid you marked attention, proposed for you, and then packed up his trunk and ran away."

"True, quite true," replied Clara, laughing; "without even leaving 'P. P. C.' at my father's door!"

"Can you account for his conduct in any way?"

"No;—I certainly often thought that he had something weighing on his mind."

"I'll be bound he was a married man!"

"Oh, no," said Clara; "I don't think that."

"What *could* it be, then?" said her friend.

"Indeed," replied Clara, "nobody can be more in the dark than myself."

"Did you know his family?"

"No; indeed I believe he had no relatives living."

"But his origin—what was it?"

"Oh, nothing very great, I believe."

"His fortune?"

"My father seemed satisfied with his representations."

"Well; and you knew where he came from, I suppose?"

"Why, not exactly;—he had been travelling, and I do not think he had any settled home."

"No settled home!—vagabondising from watering-place to watering-place!—you should be more careful, Clara, with whom you get acquainted.—Who introduced you?"

"The Master of the Ceremonies."

"Well; but his name—you *do* know *that*, I presume?"

"Oh!" cried Clara, laughing; "and *such* a name!"

"Well, what is it?"

"Dumps!" replied Clara, her risibility increasing.

"Dumps!" said her friend; "what an odd name!—surely I have heard that name before: good gracious! it just occurs to me where."

"Perhaps *you* knew him, then?"

"His Christian name?—make haste, tell me!"

"David;—not at all a nice name!"

"Oh!" cried her friend, "it is the very man!—the reprobate! the abandoned wretch!"

"You *have* met him, then?" said Clara;—"where?"

"At Boulogne."

"Explain—"

"I will;—I almost faint at the recollection! My husband dined out—I retired early to bed—I fell asleep—I was suddenly roused—"

"By what?" exclaimed Clara.

"This very Mr. Dumps, who, with his nightcap on his head, was sitting up by my side in my bed!"

"Oh, this is too much!" said Clara, who, leaning back in her chair, actually laughed herself into strong hysterics. Lady O'Flaney rang the bell; and having partially restored her friend, she sent to request the presence of the gentlemen, as she had something of importance to communicate.

"Here we have another link to the chain when we least expected it!" exclaimed Mr. Mildmay, when he had heard of his extraordinary invasion of the dormitory of her ladyship.

"Who would have thought he was such a Don Juan!" said Lomax.

"It is perfectly true," said Mr. O'Flaney; "I can swear to the name."

"Mercy on me!" cried Mr. Titterton: "and I have had him daily at my house for the last six weeks!"

"By-the-by," said Lady O'Flaney, "if I don't mistake, his name was strangely mixed up at Boulogne with that of some pretty girl."

"Oh!" said Mr. O'Flaney, "let me consider: yes, yes—I do remember now."

"What?" inquired every body present.

"He disappeared immediately afterwards—no one knew how—and there *was* a rumour—"

"Well?"

"I cannot say whether it was well founded or not—"

"What was it?"

"It certainly *was* whispered, that this same Mr. Dumps—"

"Go on."

"Had committed murder!"

Clara's laugh was loud and shrill; but in one moment she fell back pale and motionless, her eyes fixed, and her teeth firmly pressed together. Her father and uncle, with her female friend, were fully occupied endeavouring to restore her to animation.

"Surely," whispered Lomax to O'Flaney, "the law in France, as elsewhere, must be, that there cannot be a conviction for murder unless a body is found?"

"I suppose so," replied O'Flaney in the same low tone; "but before I left Boulogne, I perfectly recollect an old lady's hinting, at an *écarté* party in the Grand Rue, that David Dumps was a cannibal, and *had eaten the body!*"

For so worthless a being as Mr. Dumps was represented to be, it is not to be supposed that a girl like Clara Titterton should long mourn. She could not, it is true, bring herself at once to credit all the allegations brought against him. But what could she say in his behalf? That he had deserted her was but too evident; and his former reserve and depression of spirits served very strongly to corroborate the worst accusations now brought against him. It was poor Clara's fate to veil her feelings under smiles; and she again appeared in public, and again endeavoured to laugh off the scrutiny and the pity of the vulgar.

Mr. Lorimer Lomax felt much interested for the little lady of Cambray, and availing himself of the introduction which had taken place, he sometimes called to inquire for her, often joined her and her uncle in their walks, and now and then spent his evenings at her house, never failing on such occasions to bring his guitar.

Mr. Dumps was not the sort of man for a lady to be

sentimental about; but Clara having once admitted the possibility of his becoming her husband, the untoward *dénouement* of his brief love-story became as barassing to her as if he had been the Adonis of St. James's Street, with raven curls, white and pink cheeks, hazel eyes, and a dimple on his chin. However uninteresting the hero might appear in the eyes of others, to her, as being the origin of hopes, fears, regrets, and annoyances, he could not fail to be for ever interesting. Mr. Lomax's more lively ballads she listened to without apparent interest; but there was one which seemed to be her most especial favourite, and he had to sing it more than once every evening that he was in her company.

BALLAD.

I.

Though with ease thou sayst "Forget,"
 Oh! how hard the task for me!
 Memory, since the day we met,
 Has not had a thought—but thee!
 And thy features on my heart
 She hath traced with so much skill,
 That distinctly, when we part,
 I shall view their beauty still.

II.

Others gaze with raptured eyes
 On the roses fresh and fair;
 But more dearly do I prize
 Faded flowers I've seen thee wear.
 All thy songs return unsought;
 By thy voice I'm haunted yet!
 Oh! when thou canst banish thought,
 And then only, say,—“Forget.”

This was Clara's favourite ballad; a melancholy one, certainly. But why was it her favourite? “Though with ease thou sayst ‘Forget,’”—*that* might apply to David. The deserter might be supposed to wish that the deserted would in time forget him; and it was natural for the young lady who had sanctioned his addresses to remark, “Oh! how hard the task for me!” But there were other lines totally inapplicable to poor David: “All thy songs return unsought,—By thy voice I'm haunted yet!” What could this mean? *He* in all his born days never could sing a note; and as for his voice, Clara could not pretend to say that it haunted her.

Then, again, "prizing,"—"Faded flowers I've seen thee wear!" and *preferring* them to "roses fresh and fair!"—Was it possible that she had ever picked up a pink that David had worn in his button-hole, and then apostrophised it thus? Mr. Dumps was not the sort of man to stick pinks in his button-hole.

To whom, then, did she apply the verses?—to the singer? to the still cheerful and good-looking Lorimer, who, with his pink riband over his shoulder, lightly touched the guitar, and poured forth the still sweet and pleasing remains of a once full and melodious voice? Was *he* the individual who was not to be forgotten until thought *itself* was banished?—or was it only that the general effect of that song soothed her, and harmonised with her pensive mood; and that when she listened to it again and again with melancholy pleasure, it was not that she applied the particular expressions to her own case, but only simply approved and admired the ballad! It might be so; but many at Cheltenham thought that Mr. Lorimer Lomax had stepped into the very pair of shoes which Mr. David Dumps had so abruptly vacated.

One fact it is at all events our duty to state: Mr. Lorimer Lomax became a changed man; he dressed more carefully, held himself more erectly, and, whatever David might have done, *HE* always wore a flower in his button-hole.

He came not home, as was his custom heretofore, at rational hours to his hotel; and though the very last of the autumnal leaves were now falling from the trees in the Well-walks, he would linger under a certain balcony, (this was the *on dit*,) warbling pretty little melodies to a certain pretty little lady.

We believe that there is some old song (not one of Mr. Lorimer Lomax's favourites) which begins,

"Youth's the time for love and joy."

Now, if this means that youth is the season for most bewildering and lasting attachments, we beg leave to say it is no such thing. A youth loves "to distraction," as the saying is, he does very foolish things, he attempts in every possible way to insinuate himself into the good graces of the girl, and then wins the suffrages *of*, or else bids defiance *to*, fathers, mothers, brothers, uncles, aunts,

guardians: he loves! oh! how he loves! but "he loves and he rides away!"—a difficulty, a doubt, a jealous whim, or a feeling of satiety; we cannot say the cause, we only know that so it is; and he goes to another place, and sees another lady, and does the love all over again, and talks of his former love, or what he once falsely imagined was love, as a mere chimera, a mistake! But now he loves as never man yet loved, and he persists in it till another change comes o'er the spirit of his dream.

But it is not thus with your middle-aged man. He has no time to lose: he has kept out of the flame warily and long; but when he once begins to singe his wing, it is all over with him. Then, if he be at all successful, how proud is he of his lady's smile! And if, after luring him on to a proposal, she should jilt him after all!—he breaks down at once into the old man; no more mirth, no more melodies, no more flowers in the button-hole: his heart is withered, and he loves no more!

Lorimer Lomax was therefore at forty-five, according to our notions, just at the very period of life when Cupid makes most havoc with a man. He bought a new wig, more youthful in the wave of its curl than that he used to wear, and he slung his guitar over his shoulder with a new pink riband. He left off the Cheltenham waters, and quite forgot that he was an invalid; and in the cold dark nights of November, he paced one silent street until he saw a light from her casement beam, and then, defying the chill air, he sang ballad after ballad until the clock chimed midnight and the taper vanished. Then he went sneezing and coughing back to his hotel, indulging in bright dreams of love and happiness!

Ought we to wish him success?

CHAPTER XXI.

WE left David, two chapters (*and three weeks*) ago, parting with his friends Cockle and Kilkenny at the Albion Hotel, and promising to meet them at the same

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hour in the same place the next day, to tell his sad eventful history.

The three gentlemen were punctual; and when the cloth was removed, David solemnly revealed all the reader already knows of his adventures at Boulogne.

"And you have been in the secret?" said Cockle to the captain.

"When I asked you to take him on board your yacht, I told you he had pressing reasons for wishing to fly the French coast."

"Ay, but, hang it! I never dreamt of murder!—I beg your pardon, Mr. Dumps."

"Oh, don't mind me,—I'm used to it. Nothing you or any body else can say is worse than my own thoughts."

"But, Bob!" exclaimed Cockle, "when you got back to the town, did you tell nobody?"

"Not I: why should I mix myself up with so bad a story? I heard a great many rumours and surmises, most of which I knew to be false: one thing, however, I could not deny;—a quantity of blood was seen on the grass where that poor fellow fell."

"Oh!" groaned David.

"And as no corpse was to be found—"

"Well?" inquired David.

"—And as the murderer was also missing—"

"Yes?"

"—It was conjectured that Mr. Dumps had first killed his man, and had then carried him away. But it seems, from your own account, that the fight was forced upon you?"

"Forced upon me, sir! to be sure it was. I was not the man to go out killing people, with the chance of being killed myself, voluntarily."

"Your opponent actually put the pistol in your hand, you say?"

"Yes; and he told me when I was to fire, and showed me how to pull the trigger. Lord bless you! I never fired any thing off before, except pop-guns at school."

"It is very strange," said Cockle. "Have you ever seen those Tatum's since?"

"Never."

"Do you know where they live?"

"On Blackheath, I believe."

"Well, then, if you'll take my advice, you will go thither to-morrow morning, and make a point of seeing old Tatum. Ask him what he knows of the fate of that young fellow Arden; ascertain, if you can, what became of the body: but, of course, avoid criminating, or in any way implicating yourself."

"I'll do it," said David bravely. "Any thing would be better than this perpetual suspense."

"So I should think," answered Cockle. "To-morrow, my friend Bob and I are going to my house in Somersetshire for a week or ten days: if you have any thing important to communicate, this is my address;" and he gave a card.

"You do not, then, quite abandon me?"

"No, no. Cheer up; communicate with us there; and be assured that, if we can be of service to you, you may command us. I suppose we shall find you in Arundel-street on our return?"

"Certainly," replied David; and his heart sank within him as he parted with his two companions and returned in solitude to his lodgings.

The next morning he set off early to Blackheath, and with very little difficulty found the residence of Mr. Tatum. A female servant opened the door, and, on his inquiring for the master of the house, replied, "Not at home," and seemed inclined to prevent further parley by shutting the door.

"Perhaps you will let me go in and wait for him."

"No, sir, I mus'n't."

"Only while I write a note."

"No, you can't," said she; "and I'll tell you why. Last Sunday was a week, when the family next door was all at church but one housemaid, a man, a sight finer than you be, called and asked for Mr. Briggs."

"Well, what is that to me?"

"Wait, and you shall hear. Betty next door said, as I might do, 'Not at home;' and that 'ere chap know'd that afore he cum'd."

"I'm really in a hurry," said Mr. Dumps impatiently.

"Lau! and so was he,—just the *very* words he used! 'I'm in a hurry,' said he; 'just let me go into the drawing-room and write Mr. Briggs a note.'"

"Very natural."

"Oh, very; and Betty next door, as *I* might have done, if the rogue had come here *first*, let him in, and went to light a candle for him to seal his note when 'twas written."

"A very civil girl."

"Oh, very. But he didn't want no candle; for she met him in the passage, and he said he'd left his note on the table, and she let him out, and away he went."

"Well, there was no harm done."

"Oh, but wasn't there, though! When Mr. Briggs cum'd home from church,—oh lau! how poor Betty *did* screech! That 'ere man had taken away all the spoons, and all the forks, and two pair of silver candlesticks under his cloak; and a power of bank-notes out of a desk he'd been and broken open!"

"Indeed! I'm very sorry for it."

"Can't let you in, if you please," said the maid.

"Well, but I've very particular business with your master."

"Oh! master said if a gentleman called about *very* particular business—"

"Yes?"

"Yours is very particular?"

"Urgent business."

"Oh! if it's *hurgent*, he must have meant you. You must call at number —, Blank Court, Cornhill."

David took out a pencil, and requested the careful guardian of the Tatum property to go and fetch him a piece of paper.

"I'll put the chain across the door," said she, "and then I'll fetch it."

And, suiting the action to the word, she effectually prevented the possibility of his forcing an entrance in her absence, and soon returned with one of Mr. Tatum's own visiting-cards, on the back of which he wrote down the address, and immediately returned to town.

A coach soon wafted him to Charing-cross; and from thence he proceeded to number —, Blank Court, and

found himself at the door of a pawnbroker's shop. He entered, but was obliged to wait, as one or two customers were in possession of the shopman's ear before he arrived.

David tried to amuse himself examining the premises. There were gold chains, and cloth trousers, and gold watches, and old black silk stockings, and opera-glasses, and umbrellas, and shawls, and fiddle-cases, and we know not what besides, all ticketed as bargains second-hand, at about the prices which we might pay for precisely the same things new. But his scrutiny was brief; for, the other people being gone, the shopman was at leisure to attend to him.

"Your pleasure, sir?" said a dandified Jew boy of eighteen or nineteen.

"I wish to speak to Mr. Tatum," murmured David, greatly agitated at the anticipated interview, and the nature of the topic to be discussed.

"Mr. Tatum never speaks to no one here; and if he did, he's been gone pleasuring these six weeks."

"Oh dear me!" said Dumps, "I have most particular business, and I brought this with me from Blackheath."

"Oh yes; that's master's visiting-card, sure enough. All's right, then. Here's all you want sealed up in this packet."

"Indeed!" said David. "I shall now, then, know all."

"Oh yes; you'll find it all right. It's been lying here for you some time."

"Oh, I wish I had called before!" said David, scarcely knowing what he did, as he mechanically took the packet.

"You see 't isn't *directed* to you," said the lad with a knowing confidential wink; "because we thought you mightn't like your name to be seen, for private reasons."

"Oh! ah!" said David, shrinking as he felt that there was one more person in possession of his fatal secret.

"But, lau!" added the boy, "more does the same than you'd think. The head man's just stepped out: leave master's card, that I may show it's all right."

Some other persons entered the shop at the moment; and grasping his sealed packet, he walked away, and calling a coach, immediately returned to Arundel-street.

As soon as he entered his own room, he locked the

door, placed the packet on the table, and sinking down in a chair in a state of exhaustion, he gazed at it for a long time without moving, almost without breathing.

"Now, then," thought he, "all will be revealed,—in a moment I shall know my fate;" and he seized the packet, but instantly threw it down again, as it occurred to him that it would be more prudent to break the seals in the presence of some more friendly witnesses, who would hereafter testify to the truth of the statement, should it in any degree exonerate him. But the statement might be one of utter condemnation;—who, then, could he trust? His landlady?—impossible. He knew not one being in all London to whom he could confide such a secret. He paced his room in violent agitation, and at last came to the resolution of setting out instantly for the house of Mr. Cockle in Somersetshire, and breaking the seals of this important packet in the presence of that gentleman and his guest Captain Kilkenny. He hastily packed up a few requisite articles, and merely telling his landlady that he was going into the country for a few days, he got into the Bath mail, and reached his friend's house, situated some miles from that city, very early the next morning.

Great was his disappointment when Mrs. Cockle informed him her husband and his friend had spent the last two days at Bath; but she assured him he was welcome, and added that she expected them home to dinner. David spent a very tedious, wretched day: the trees were all leafless, the walks were all sloppy, and there was a nasty drizzling rain. There is nothing so distressing as having a guest to amuse in a country house who can't amuse himself, and who plainly shows you his vacant, spiritless smiles and deep sighs, that your efforts are unavailing, and that he is wishing himself a hundred miles off. In such a case the wish *must* soon be mutual.

This was poor Mrs. Cockle's case; and at length, having done her best for three very long hours, she pursued her own avocations, and left him to amuse himself (or not) as best he could. With an umbrella and clogs he went down to the village, thinking there never was in

the world so dirty a place, quite forgetting that all country places must be dirty in wet weather. All the dogs barked at him—and that he did not like; and all the men, women, and children ran out to stare at him at the cottage doors. "What a set of plain people!" thought he. "I used to think Cheltenham the town *for beauty*; I'm sure *this* is (like sweet Auburn)

"The loveliest village of the plain!"

only that the village isn't a bit more lovely than the people."

He then walked round the church, looked at the tombstones, and in fact ascertained that there was nothing at all worth seeing; and then he returned to Cockle Hall, where the lady of the mansion informed him that her husband and Captain Kilkenny had agreed to join a party to the Bath theatre that evening, and consequently would not return home until the next day.

"Then," said her guest, "pray let me have a hack chaise, and I will go to them at Bath."

Mrs. Cockle was only too happy to be spared a *tête-à-tête* with her guest, and in a quarter of an hour, he, with his sealed packet, was on his way to Bath.

On his arrival at an hotel, being aware that his friends dined with a party, he took a slight and solitary repast, and about nine o'clock followed them to the theatre. Cockle, who was near the front with some ladies, turned round, looked surprised, nodded his head, and then gave all his attention to the stage. But David fortunately found Captain Kilkenny in the back row, and there being a vacant seat, he took it, and carried on a whispering conversation with him, in which Kilkenny readily joined, as he felt no small astonishment at seeing him there, and was anxious for an explanation.

"Well," said Kilkenny in a low tone, "I hope you've got good news?"

"I don't know; I've got it in my pocket."

"In your pocket!"

"Yes, sealed up."

"Silence!" said an old gentleman to the right.

"I wish people would let people hear the play!" said a fat lady to the left.

"Hush!" whispered David.

"Mum!" whispered Kilkenny.

For the first time David gave his attention to the stage. The play of Pizarro was drawing towards a close, and the audience were deeply interested in the escape of Rolla and the child over the bridge.

"Did you hear that man's voice?" he exclaimed.

"Which man?" replied Kilkenny.

"The man they were shooting at going over the bridge."

"Silence!" said the old gentleman to the right.

"Abominable!" said the fat lady to the left.

"Hush!" whispered David.

"Mum!" whispered Kilkenny.

David said no more until the next scene, where Rolla rushes in bleeding, lays the child at Cora's feet and falls exhausted. The actor was a fine handsome young man; his action was graceful, his death picturesque, though the effusion of blood was rather painful to the spectators than otherwise.

The audience testified their approbation loudly, and it was not until the conclusion of the third round of applause that Kilkenny observed David standing erect in the box, his face pale, his eyes starting out of his head, with one hand pointed immoveably at the actor.

"I declare most solemnly, 'tis he!" said Dumps, as loud as if he had been addressing a gentleman in the stage-box from the centre one which Mr. Cockle's party occupied.

"What is the matter with you?" said Kilkenny.

"Tis *he*, I tell you," replied David in a hollow voice.

"You mean that actor?" said Kilkenny, referring to his play-bill.

"I do," answered David solemnly. "Can the grave give up its dead!"

"Turn him out!" cried every body every where.

"By Jove you are right!" said Kilkenny: "see here,—the part of Rolla by Mr. George Arden."

Mr. Dumps fainted away, and was removed to the hotel, attended by Captain Kilkenny, and speedily followed by Mr. Cockle.

When David began to recover himself, he had but a very indistinct recollection of the occurrences of the

evening; but Kilkenny soon brought all vividly before him, by stating that he had already sent a note to the theatre, and had no doubt Mr. George Arden would join them as soon as he had finished his performance in the afterpiece.

"Coming!" cried David; "coming *here*?"

"Yes, of course; it was the very best arrangement that could be made."

"Alive, or dead?"

"Alive, decidedly, or I and Cockle should never have volunteered to join your party."

"But how is all this to be accounted for?" asked poor bewildered David.

"It can only be explained by Mr. Arden himself," replied Cockle; "and here he comes to answer all your questions."

Mr. George Arden was very naturally somewhat embarrassed at making his *début* in the character of Epilogue to his own tragedy, before the three gentlemen who had so anxiously awaited his arrival. But David evinced such extraordinary satisfaction at beholding him, and the other two seemed so placid, that Arden comfortably seated himself before the fire in the seat that was offered to him, and accepted the full glass which Cockle placed before him.

"Alive, I do declare!" exclaimed David, gazing at Arden's handsome face.

"Quite so, I assure you, Mr. Dumps," he replied, "and not a little ashamed to meet one who has so much reason to complain of my conduct."

"And your health does not appear to have suffered?"

"I am quite well, thank you," said Arden, laughing.

"But the wound I inflicted, where was it?"

"In your own imagination."

"Nay, the loss of blood—"

"—Was a theatrical contrivance precisely similar to that resorted to by the Rolla of this evening."

"Oh!" exclaimed David, taking a long breath.

"Then," said Kilkenny, "that young lady must have been in the plot."

"Not at all," replied Arden: "I was plotting against *her* even more than against this good gentleman here.

If you will do me the favour to listen, 'I will a round unvarnished tale deliver, of my whole course of love.'—Miss Tatum was at school at Brighton when first I saw her; I was then a thoughtless young man, just entering on the arduous career of the stage. The young ladies were not, I suppose, permitted to go to the theatre; therefore it was only in my walks that I met her. She was young and inexperienced,—too young for society, yet rather too old for school; and in her ignorance she not only took me for an independent gentleman, but also thought me a very good-looking one. I very soon contrived to ascertain *her* history; and finding that she was the only child of a very rich retired pawnbroker, I took every opportunity of fostering and encouraging her prepossession in my favour,—threw up my engagement, followed her to Blackheath, and subsequently to Boulogne-sur-Mer, where I first had the happiness of making this gentleman's acquaintance. Her father had not discovered my profession; but he had made inquiries about my situation and prospects, which were so unsatisfactorily answered, that he gave his daughter strict injunctions never to speak to me again. We had now to contend with a difficulty—and difficulties generally strengthen the attachments of romantic young ladies: we were resolved to carry on a clandestine correspondence, but we were puzzled how to cloak it from the old gentleman's observation."

"Ay, so you adopted my Mackintosh?" said David reproachfully.

"We did so," replied Arden; "and your discovery of the trick brought matters to a climax. I persuaded you to meet me, and at the same time despatched a note to Miss Tatum, and one to this gentleman: to *her*, because my object in meeting you at all was to induce the romantic young lady to marry the man who had fought for her."

"And why to *me*?" inquired Kilkenny.

"Because, as soon as I was supposed to be in a dying state, I knew I should require some active intelligent gentleman who would remove my hated rival from the field, and leave me and the lady of my love together."

"And a pretty set of dupes we were!" said Kilkenny.

"As soon as you were gone, Miss Tatum in the anguish of the moment threw off all reserve, and declared that if my life was spared, she would, in defiance of consequences, brave her father's anger, and marry the man whose blood then stained her pocket-handkerchief."

"Well," said David, "you married her?"

"Unfortunately," replied Arden, "the most difficult and embarrassing part of my performance yet remained to be acted: I had also to throw off reserve,—to confess that, instead of facing real danger, I had fallen at the report of a pistol primed with powder only, and that the stream of blood which saturated my Russia ducks had been obtained at a pork-shop in Boulogne, and conveyed about my person in a little bladder until the precise moment when I wished to frighten away Mr. Dumps, and to gain an entire ascendancy over her too susceptible heart. 'He will perish at my feet!' cried the frantic girl; 'is there no help? let me bind up the wound!' But still I put off the confession that there was no wound at all, and, pressing her more closely in my arms, affected to grow fainter and fainter. I never was so completely puzzled in my life; for I dreaded, as well I might, giving my heroine the matter-of-fact information that she had been making much ado about nothing, and that I was perfectly well able to get up and walk back to Boulogne with her. At last with frantic energy she cried, 'Could I but be assured of your eventual recovery, I would watch unwearied by your side for months!' 'Would you?' I replied: 'then I have indeed put your affection sufficiently to the test.'

"'What do you mean?' said Rebecca, as I very coolly rose from my recumbent position, and began to remove my blood-stained garments, which were in fact only *overalls*, and covered another suit.

"'Be happy, my Rebecca!' I exclaimed: 'I am unhurt.'

"'Unhurt!' cried the lady in utter amazement.

"'Yes,' I answered, still arranging my costume, and washing my hands and face with the contents of a bottle of *eau-de-Cologne* which I had provided for the purpose.

“ ‘I do not understand you, sir,’ said she.

“ ‘The fact is, it was all a trick,’ I replied.

“ ‘And I the dupe!’ she exclaimed.

“ ‘No, no,—Mr. Dumps—my rival,’ stammered I.

“ ‘Rival! you are well aware he was no rival,’ said Miss Tatum indignantly. ‘I was the person to be deceived by this mountebank trick! Who are you, sir?’

“ ‘Dearest! your devoted slave,’ I answered in my most insinuating tone.

“ ‘After this exhibition, sir, I desire to know who and what you are?’

“ ‘Until our first meeting,’ I replied, ‘I devoted my hours of recreation to Thespian pursuits.’

“ ‘In plain language, you were a strolling player.’

“ ‘I certainly had an engagement at—’

“ ‘O what a fool I have been!’ cried Rebecca, bursting into tears.

“ ‘Forgive me! oh, forgive me!’ I exclaimed, throwing myself on one knee, putting my head a little on one side, and clasping my hands together.

“ ‘Rise, Mr. Arden,’ said she with an effort to assume composure: ‘I feel that I have been much more to blame than yourself, and I have to thank you for a salutary lesson which I trust I never shall forget. Do not interrupt me,—entreaty, argument, expostulation, will be alike useless,—we part here probably never to meet again; and to prove that I do not resent that which has truly been the result of my own want of prudence, I request you will take my purse, which will enable you the more easily to comply with my wishes when I entreat you—nay, command you to leave this place instantly, promising not to appear again in Boulogne, at least while I remain there.’

“ ‘I took the purse, which was heavy, and confessing that without it I had not the means of leaving France, I asked her to point out the mode of my departure.

“ ‘It is now past eleven,’ she replied; ‘at twelve the English coach to Calais will pass along that road which runs within a few hundred yards of us. It will in all probability arrive at Calais in time for the packet; and should that be the case, you will be at Dover this evening, and in London early to-morrow.’

“ ‘I obey you,’ I exclaimed; ‘but let me hope that years of devoted constancy may—’

“ ‘Silence, sir!’ interrupted the indignant lady. ‘I shall instantly return home by this path, which leads along the edge of the cliffs to the houses on the Port: presume not to follow me.’

“ ‘I will not,’ I replied.

“ ‘And you will leave this place in the manner I have suggested?’ she inquired.

“ ‘I give you my word that I will do so,’ I answered, honouring her for the good sense and decision which at once extinguished all my hopes.

“ ‘Then, sir,’ said she, ‘farewell for ever! I leave you without anger,—nay, I leave you with regret, for I cannot but upbraid myself, feeling, as I do, that my folly has involved you in disappointment. God bless you, Mr. Arden! Should we ever meet again, and I be in a situation to assist you in any way, do not hesitate to apply to me: I shall consider it my duty to exert myself in your behalf.’

“ ‘She loves me still,’ thought I.

“ ‘But pray, understand, sir, that any future attempt on your part to renew an intimacy or a correspondence will entirely obliterate the good feeling which a sense of justice now induces me to avow. I wish you success and happiness, Mr. Arden,’ she added; ‘and now, farewell!’

“And, without once turning her head, she walked along the path which she had chosen. I stood in a state of bewilderment, gazing after her, and fully expecting that one lingering look from the rapidly-departing figure would at least revive hope in my bosom; but she was resolute, and on she walked, never looking back, until at length her form faded from my view. I have never seen her since. The Telegraph coach took me up at the hour she named; and so propitious were the winds and the tides, that I dined that day at Dover, and breakfasted the next morning at the Golden Cross, Charing-Cross.”

“And, after all, I’m not a murderer!” exclaimed David.

“Having now explained every thing, I will leave

you, gentlemen," said Arden. "It is very late, and I am sure Mr. Dumps requires repose."

"O that I had known all this six weeks ago!" cried David after Arden had left the room. "I might have explained every thing to Mr. Mildmay, to Mr. Lomax, and—"

David paused, and looked as miserable as if his hands had still been stained with gore.

"By-the-by," said Mr. Cockle, "we have had letters from Cheltenham. We did not like to annoy you; but now that all can be explained, it is best to tell you that your friends there are at least aware there was a rumour of a murder."

"You don't say so?" cried David. "Well, I must write to-morrow."

"And I," said Kilkenny, "have had a letter from Lorimer Lomax; and there is one passage in his letter which deeply concerns you."

"What is it?" inquired David.

"Why, I should have hesitated to tell you; but as you voluntarily deserted the lady, there can be no great harm in reading what he says."

"Read it," said David, breathlessly.

"Here it is," continued Kilkenny, producing the letter: "read it yourself."

He pointed to the passage; and David read aloud, "I am going to be married to-morrow to your friend Mr. Dumps's former love."

The letter fell from David's hand.

"To-morrow!—then they are married!" cried he; "then the stain has been removed too late!"

"By-the-by," said Mr. Cockle, "you have not opened your packet. 'Tis true we know every thing we want to know without its aid; but you may as well break the seals."

"Open it," replied David, passively, handing the sealed parcel across the table to Cockle. The seals were broken, and the envelopes unfolded, until a small red morocco case was visible; and on opening that, to David's utter amazement, he beheld a very handsome diamond necklace, with brooch, bracelets, and earrings to match!

CHAPTER XXI.

"DARING ROBBERY!"

"FIFTY POUNDS REWARD!"

"WHEREAS on the afternoon of the 16th instant a person entered the shop of Messrs. Tatum and Swop, number —, Blank Court, Cornhill, and by a false statement, and the production of a card purporting to come from one of the partners, he obtained possession of diamonds of very considerable value. He has been traced to his lodgings in Arundel-street, Strand, by information given by the hackney-coachman who conveyed him there; but, as he left the house abruptly that night it is supposed he is gone towards the coast. He passed at his lodgings under the name of David Dumps; is about five feet in height, between five-and-twenty and thirty years of age, rather stout, dark wig, sallow complexion, gray eyes, and a melancholy cast of countenance. Whoever will give such information as may lead to his apprehension will receive the above reward."

Before our hero left his bed in the morning after his interview with George Arden, Captain Kilkenny entered his room with the Morning Herald of the preceding day in his hand, and exclaimed,

"Wish me joy! I have fifty pounds at my command this morning, when I least expected such a windfall."

"Fifty pounds!" cried David. "Ah, you are one of the lucky ones! I might look into newspapers long enough before I should find any intelligence appertaining to myself."

"Don't be too sure of that," replied Kilkenny. "Besides, what are fifty pounds compared with those brilliants you exhibited last night?"

"Talking of those brilliants," answered he, sitting up in bed, and looking even more serious than usual, "do you know, I dreamt of them!"

"Did you indeed?"

"Yes: I thought I'd take another look at them; and

when I opened the box, they were changed into a suit of jet."

"Ominous, hey?"

"*Very* ominous. One thing is certain—they never could be intended for me; and should the error be discovered, I suppose they'll make a very unpleasant row about it."

"My good friend," said Kilkenny, "that is precisely what has brought me to your bed-side at this unseasonable hour. Prompt measures must instantly be taken, for the error *is* discovered, and the very unpleasant row has commenced."

"You don't say so!"

"Yes, indeed; and the fifty pounds I mentioned is the precise sum I am to receive on delivering you into the hands of justice."

"Oh!" cried poor David, throwing himself back in his bed, "do it,—do it at once. I'll make no defence,—I'll give no explanation,—I'd rather be killed than go on as I have done all my life. I've been labouring under an imputation of murder for months, and, what was worse, thought myself guilty; and now, the very day that my character is cleared and my conscience relieved of *that* crime, I am publicly accused of robbery!—Take the fifty pounds, and let me die!"

And David pulled the clothes over his head, and rolling himself up in a ball, gave way to a low melancholy moaning.

"Come, come, man, this won't do!" said Kilkenny, with difficulty refraining from laughter. "Peep out of your nest, will you? Nay, for goodness' sake, don't make that doleful noise! Let me see your face, and listen to me calmly;" and he gradually revealed David's countenance by forcibly pulling away the blanket.

"How can you ask me to be calm!" cried David, starting up in a rage. "You're in a plot against me,—all the world are up in arms against me, I believe."

"Your present difficulty can easily be removed," said Kilkenny, "for all can be explained; Cockle, myself, and indeed several other witnesses, can prove that your explanation is correct, and that you were yourself as—

tonished at the contents of the packet, which you opened in our presence."

"True," said David; "there's something in that."

"To be sure," added Kilkenny, "it is unfortunate that they should have obtained your name at your lodgings, and made it public."

"My name!—published!—give me the paper!" exclaimed Dumps; and having hastily read the paragraph, he again moaned, and again retired under the blankets.

Captain Kilkenny, seeing that consolation in the present state of David's mind would be thrown away, went at once to the respectable proprietor of the hotel, pointed out to him the paragraph, and acknowledged that the occupant of "number thirty-seven" was the individual alluded to therein. He, however, fully explained the circumstances, and stated that Mr. Cockle and himself were going to accompany Mr. Dumps immediately to London.

Every morning and evening paper contained the paragraph we have quoted; and as Mr. Dumps had, as a matter of course, been addressed by his own name at the hotel, Kilkenny's explanation was a matter of necessity. Mr. Cockle, who lived within a morning's drive of Bath, and always went to the same hotel, was a sufficient guarantee for the accuracy of all the captain had stated; and, after an early breakfast, the trio set off for London, Mr. Cockle leaving at his lodge-gate, as he passed, a note explanatory of his sudden departure.

David said little during his journey; and his kind and considerate companions did not attempt to enliven him, rightly judging that, until the imputation of felony was removed, he could not be expected to shake off his despondency. They arrived in London at night, so late that no business in the city could be attended to; but at a very early hour, both Cockle and Kilkenny repaired to number —, Blank Court, Cornhill,—replaced the jewels, not in the hands of the careless Jew boy, but in the possession of Tatum's confidential partner, and, after full and satisfactory explanations, Mr. Swop prepared a paragraph for the evening papers, contradictory of that which had disturbed the peace of our well-meaning and much-misunderstood hero.

Left to himself for at least three hours, he had at first paced his apartment with rapid and irregular strides; but as the conviction came upon him, that, however humiliating it might be to have even temporary publicity given to his name in connexion with a supposed robbery, still his character must immediately be cleared, he became more tranquil, and, sitting down by the fire with calmer feelings but with deeper gloom, he thought of her, now, alas! wedded to another, with whom he had once hoped to unite his destiny! How galling to him was the consideration that *she* must have seen, either in the "Post," "Herald," "Times," or "Chronicle," "Globe," "Courier," "Standard," or "Sun," the hated paragraph! Perhaps her husband at the breakfast-table handed it with a smile to her across the muffins, secretly exulting in the degradation of even an unsuccessful rival: and all this, too, at a time when her mind had already been poisoned against him, and when his name was whispered in connexion with a deed of blood!

"I will write to her," said he to himself;—"yes, I will write;—I will ask for one interview, merely to clear my character—she cannot refuse that: and then, though we shall never meet again, I shall live—or die—comparatively happy!"

When his two friends returned from their protracted interview with Mr. Swop, they found him much more composed than they expected.

"You may now," said Cockle, "feel perfectly at ease—no one can ever esteem you less on account of this extraordinary mistake—and we have brought you an evening paper, containing the paragraph that fully and unequivocally exonerates you."

"Thank you," replied Dumps: "I must send it off by the post to Cheltenham, and at the same time this letter, which I have written in your absence;—pray tell me Mr. Lomax's present address?"

"The Promenade, Cheltenham,' is sure to reach him," said Kilkenny: "but why have you written to him on the subject?"

"I have not written to *him*; I have written to—to—"

"To whom?" said Cockle, inconsiderately.

"To his—wife," replied David, speaking thickly.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Cockle: "take care what you're about."

"You may read the letter," said he: and Cockle, taking it from his hand, read aloud as follows:

"DEAR MADAM,

"You may start at receiving a letter from one who, however well known to you in former and, to him, happier days, has since been accused of two of the worst of crimes—murder and robbery. Pray grant me one brief interview, in which I may prove to you that I am innocent: this will be some consolation to me during my future solitary existence; and wishing you every happiness, I shall bless you for your kindness. I leave London to-night, and shall be in Cheltenham when you receive this; pray, therefore, put me out of suspense, and address one line to me at the Waterloo Hotel.

"I remain, madam,

"Your obedient humble servant,

"DAVID DUMPS."

"Then you and your letter, I suppose start together by the same conveyance?" said Cockle.

"Exactly so. I am unfortunately now so well known at Cheltenham, that were I to write a note at the hotel on my arrival and send it by a porter, my motives would be questioned, and I should be mobbed before I could keep my appointment in the Promenade. This letter, with the newspaper, will be delivered by the postman, while I shall rest quietly in my bedroom at an hotel, where I trust I shall not be recognised, until I am summoned by Mrs. Lomax's reply."

"It is not badly planned," replied Kilkenny; "and may success attend you!"

"Success!" said the sufferer with a ghastly smile; "what have I to anticipate success in!"

"Well, let us hear of you, at least," cried Cockle. "And remember, having well cleared your character, you will be at liberty to select another lady, who may not prove so fickle."

"You don't know me," answered David: "I never

should have had the courage to own I loved, had not she—I beg your pardon—I shall be better by-and-by—”

“What?” said Kilkenny.

“—Had not she *seemed* to love *me*. But that illusion is past: all I want now is to make her confess that no misconduct on my part authorised her union with another.”

“When you want change of scene, come to Cockle Hall—a cheerful country place, a pretty village, and a healthy situation.”

“Thank you,” said David, perfectly recollecting the agreeable morning he had spent there; and shaking hands with his friends, he went to prepare himself for his journey.

The horn sounded; “Cheltenham mail!” was shouted by porters, waiters, boots, and chambermaids; and our hero took his place with three other persons in the interior. He could not sleep. In how short a period would he again stand before her who was still dearer to him than all the world! How soon would that brief interview be over!—and then, what was to become of him? to whom should he turn for consolation? Such were his cogitations during the long, dark, wintry night; and in the morning he alighted at the Waterloo Hotel, Cheltenham, thoroughly worn out, and dispirited.

David entered the inn enveloped in a cloak, the collar of which was elevated to hide as much of the *lower* part of his face as possible; and on his head was a seal-skin cap, very much the colour of sponge, the flaps of which were lowered and nearly enveloped the *upper* part of his face, so that neither the waiter who ushered him in, nor the chambermaid who prepared his room, could form the least guess what manner of man he was.

From the inmost recesses of his cap and the collar of his cloak came forth a muffled voice demanding a fire and hot water; and both these luxuries being obtained, he double-locked his door, and threw himself upon the bed.

Suddenly he started up, enveloped himself as before, rang the bell, and inquired of the chambermaid whether the post was yet delivered.

"The man's just been here with the letters," said Sarah, simpering.

"Oh, he has been here;—none for me, of course?"

"You haven't told me your name, sir," said Sarah.

"I know—there *can* be none for me," added David.

"Tell me, my good girl, are the letters delivered at the same hour in the Promenade?"

"Much about the same," said Sarah.

"She's got it, then!" cried he, clasping his hands.
"You may go."

Again Sarah departed to tell the waiter she couldn't make out the man in the cloak; and David locked his door once more. Presently he again roused himself:

"If her answer is brought, as they do not know my name, they will let it lie in the bar."

Again he rang the bell, and Sarah made her appearance; and this time the mysterious stranger threw off the incognito so far as to say, that if any letter was left for Mr. Dumps, it must be brought to him directly.

Can any torture exceed the anxiety of moments like these!—the waiting, watching, eagerly listening for a person or a letter which comes not! Now he started up, and paced the room backwards and forwards; then, hearing a noise below or on the stairs, he ran to the door and opened it, and went forward a few paces and peeped over the bannisters. But as the noise subsided, and no one sought his room, he again retired, and sat down by his fire and poked it; and having utterly done away with the very little inclination which it had hitherto shown to light up, he threw down the poker, and paced his narrow den.

A renewal of the noise below again attracted him forth, and he heard a voice saying,

"You are sure *that* is his name?"

"Yes, sir; he said so," was the reply.

"A new arrival?"

"Yes, sir."

He now distinctly heard somebody coming towards his room,—he did not dare to breathe. There was a knock at the door, and Sarah, smilingly entered, saying, "A letter for you, sir."

Without turning his head, he pointed to the table, and murmured, "Put it down."

He could not have ventured to open it in the presence of Sarah or any other human being!

When he was again alone, he rose, locked the door, walked to the table on which lay the letter, looked at it, took it up, threw it down, and felt as if he were going to faint.

"What is the matter with me?" cried he at last. "Let me know at once whether I am to see her again." With trembling hand he broke the seal and took off the envelope. (What a bore is an envelope to a man in a hurry!) He unfolded the enclosure, and read as follows:

"The Master of the Ceremonies' first Ball for the winter season will take place on Thursday next, the sixteenth of December."

David crumpled it up in his hands, and made use of an expression exceedingly indecorous, and improper for us to transcribe, and most unceremonious as applied to a master of the ceremonies.

But the period of suspense must one way or another, sooner or later, come to an end; and when Sarah again knocked at the door, she brought an exceedingly small envelope of pink paper, containing the minutest possible note, extremely odoriferous, and in pale blue ink was written the following brief address:

"To DAVID DUMPS, Esq.

"Mrs. Lorimer Lomax presents her compliments to Mr. Dumps, and will be happy to receive him as soon as it is convenient to him to favour her with a call."

Mrs. Lorimer Lomax! Yes, there it was,—not exactly in black and white, but in pink and blue! She had indeed renounced and forgotten him, and she now unfeelingly addressed him under the hated name which identified her as another's! A rumour may be false, an assertion incorrect; and he had travelled to Cheltenham with a vague, indistinct, unacknowledged notion that, after all, he might be happy; but now the rumour was corroborated by her own pen, and he crushed the letter in his hand. But there was no time for inactive regrets: he put on his great-coat, and prepared for his visit. He would now have given worlds to have avoided this in-

terview; but he had sought it, had travelled many miles to obtain it, and the lady had condescended to grant his very urgent request. He could not, therefore, think of evading it, and therefore slowly and reluctantly he walked towards the Promenade.

"Alas!" said he to himself, "I know her well,—she will laugh at me! Oh, Clara, Clara! would that we had never met!"

He knocked at the door, and the footman ushered him up stairs into the drawing-room, where he was left alone to meditate over the little articles of *bijouterie* which ornamented the tables.

"Here she spends her mornings," soliloquised David; "here she probably read the account of my imputed robbery,—here she received my letter, and there lies the pen with which she this morning addressed me. Here, too, her husband sits with her, and talks to her, and doubtless abuses me. Oh! why came I hither?"

But he heard a footstep,—he turned, and the master of the house, the husband of the lady, stood before him, and holding out his hand, uttered a frank and hearty welcome.

David could not take the proffered hand,—he could not speak;—there was something so heartless in a man's supplanting another in the affections of a girl, being all the time perfectly aware of their attachment, and then assuming towards him so grossly wronged the language of friendship. David sank down on a chair.

"My good sir," exclaimed Lomax, "you have, I fear, suffered much since we met."

"I have indeed," replied David.

"But now, I trust, your sorrows are over."

"Over!"

"Yes; be assured that no one has the slightest doubt of your integrity: you have not lost one friend in consequence of that unfortunate rumour."

"Not lost a friend!" said his visiter bitterly; "no, perhaps not, for I had not one friend left."

"Nay, you really wrong us: to say nothing of others, there are myself and Mrs. Lomax."

"Mrs. Lomax!"

"Yes ; you *did* profess once to take an interest in her, and she really has felt much for you."

"Well !" exclaimed David, "this really exceeds every thing I could have anticipated."

"What *do* you mean, my good fellow ?" said Lomax.

"Why, after all that has passed between Mrs. Lomax and myself within the last two months, I really think I might have been spared—"

"Passed between you ? O dear me ! speak to her yourself—you must have misinterpreted her intentions. Here she is."

The door opened ; Mr. Dumps rose from his seat ; and Mrs. Lorimer Lomax, in the form of Miss Rebecca Tatum, entered the room. David sank down again, and the lady, crossing the room, and, with some confusion of manner, extended her hand towards him.

"Miss Tatum !" exclaimed he.

"Mrs. Lomax you must call me now," she replied ; "and as I was a very giddy, foolish, girl when we last met, I shall beg you to forget the past, and to date our acquaintance from this day."

"You seem astonished !" exclaimed Lomax. "I thought you were aware of my marriage with your old acquaintance."

"I *am* astonished indeed," replied David.

"Yet surely," said Rebecca, "your letter alluded to our former meeting."

"Oh dear no : I thought I was addressing another lady !"

"Then who, in the name of wonder, did you think I had married ?" inquired Lomax.

"Clara ; I mean, Miss Titterton."

"Oh, I understand now."

"And is *she*—" he paused.

"Married, you mean ?" added Lomax.

David nodded, but could not speak.

"She is free," replied Lomax.

"And I came here expecting to see her your bride !" exclaimed David, draining a bumper of Madeira from the luncheon tray which had been placed beside him.

"Why, she was his confidant," said Rebecca ; "and he assures me he used to sit by her side for hours together talking about me !"

"Very suspicious, was it not?" replied Lomax.

"I care not," cried David, "if Clara be but still unmarried."

"And what made you think she was *my* wife?"

"Because, in one of your letters to Kilkenny, you said you were going to be married to—" He stopped suddenly, and looked awkward.

"Oh, I remember what I said perfectly," replied Lomax. "I was going to be married to *your* 'old flame;' that was the expression—and very true, was it not?"

"No, no,—'old *friend*' would have been much more appropriate," answered the lady.

"The devil take such friendship!" thought David, as the intercepted correspondence with George Arden flashed upon his memory. But he had now seen a little of the world; so he smiled at Mr. Lomax, bowed to Mrs. Lomax, and kept his thoughts to himself.

"And now can we be of any use to you?" said Lomax: "will you dine with us to-day?"

"To be candid, I must acknowledge, I can enter into no engagement—I can think of nothing—until I have seen Clara."

"Of course not," replied Mrs. Lomax considerably: "they still live in Cambray."

"I must go thither;—and yet perhaps I ought to prepare her for the visit. You are acquainted with her; will you do me the favour of calling there, my name having been so unfortunately linked with your father's?"

"Oh, that horrid mistake!" interrupted the lady: "we all know *you* were not to blame."

"Well, then, will you announce my arrival to her?"

"Why, I know her very slightly; but here is one of her most intimate friends, who, I am sure, will be happy to oblige you."

The door opened, and a stout good-looking lady walked in and shook hands with Mr. and Mrs. Lomax; and then the latter, turning round, exclaimed,

"Dear me! I must not forget to make you two acquainted. Lady Betty O'Flaney, allow me to present Mr. David Dumps."

"David Dumps!" cried her ladyship, sitting down hastily, and holding her handkerchief before her face.

And Mr. Dumps, perfectly well recollecting when and where he had last seen that lady, immediately seized his hat, bowed himself out of the room, and left the house.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WITH a palpitating heart and a trembling hand David knocked at Mr. Titterton's door in Cambray Place. But, however confused his thoughts might be, he had the discretion to ask for Mr. Mildmay; and that gentleman being at home, he was at once ushered into the drawing-room. Mr. Mildmay joined him immediately, and received him with a kindness which at once dispelled all his anxiety.

"We have been very much interested about you," said he.

"You saw that paragraph, I fear?" replied David.

"Oh yes; but I received a letter from London which exonerated you, even before I read the newspaper refutation."

"Indeed!"

"And I have heard a full and particular account of your interview with Mr. Arden."

"You astonish me!"

"Oh, you have not been forgotten by your friends, I assure you, though you did leave us all so cavalierly. Why did you not frankly confide the truth to me? all would have been well, and you, as well as *other people*, might have been spared much anxiety."

"I dared not," replied David: "indeed, until I saw Mr. Arden, I really supposed him dead."

"Well, we must have no more misunderstandings."

"Indeed I hope not. I came to Cheltenham to enter into every explanation which could be demanded."

"Oh, I am sorry for that," said Mildmay.

"Nay, you have kindly acknowledged that you were all interested for me; therefore an explanation could not

be intrusive. May I ask what kind friend it was who wrote my exculpation from the charge of robbery, before you read it in the paper?"

"Certainly,—it was my niece."

"Clara?"

"Yes, Clara. She has been in London since Monday, staying with my unmarried sister in Baker-street."

"And Mr. Titterton?"

"He is with her. I stayed behind to arrange some trifling business, and mean to join them to-morrow."

"Then, pray let me travel with you," exclaimed David. "I have come to Cheltenham to very little purpose; and now the sooner I go back to London the better. I once offered to become your travelling companion from Arras: you avoided me then,—perhaps I shall be more fortunate now."

Mr. Mildmay willingly acceded to his proposal, and at an early hour the next morning they were on their way to the metropolis.

Clara Titterton had, as Mr. Mildmay said, written him the true statement of David's imputed misdemeanor; and having also seen Captain Kilkenny since her arrival in London, she was aware that he was as innocent of murder as he was of felony. We have already sufficiently betrayed her kindly feelings towards David; and when her uncle announced to her that he had been his travelling companion, and would in all probability pay her a very early visit the next day, she laughingly said that she supposed he was then to be put upon his trial.

"And what will your verdict be?"

"Oh!" cried Clara, "I am no judge."

"His fate is in your hands."

"Well, then, I'll acquit him, and send him about his business."

"No, no,—keep him out of harm's way for the future."

Clara laughed; but she did not think of the meeting that was in store for her without many a serious reflection. Was David for ever to be the victim of petty annoyances?—and was she, if united to him, doomed to participate in the discomfort which they entailed? She had no such dread; she knew right well that any in-

active mind must inevitably be depressed by trifles which would pass unheeded by one whose hands and thoughts were well employed.

When he appeared before her, and for the first time ventured to kiss her cheek, she laughed heartily, and told him that his adventures would entitle him to become a hero of romance.

"And will you be my heroine?" said he.

"Certainly not!" exclaimed Clara: "I must have no more adventures."

"And how will you extricate me from them?"

"Just as I would keep children out of mischief,—by giving them something to do."

"But what *can* I do at my age? I am too old for a profession."

"Fortunately, as I'm told, you are rich enough to dispense with professional pursuits; but, depend on it, you would have been happier in a surplice, a barrister's wig, a sailor's jacket, or a soldier's coat."

"It may be so; but regret comes too late."

"Not a bit of it: there is employment for every man who has intellect and a right hand. Leaving literary pursuits out of the question, you can cultivate cabbages, or turn ivory toys, or stick pins in insects, and arrange them side by side in glass cases; nay, men had better make cabbage-nets, or do worsted work, however effeminate some may deem such employments—far better than loiter and lounge about the world, simpering at the follies of other people, and laying themselves open to any hoax, jest, or worry, which the idle in *their* folly may wantonly throw upon them."

"There's some truth in what you say, certainly," said David; "and to prove I think so, in future I will endeavour to find for every season an appropriate occupation."

There is no period in people's lives so intensely interesting to themselves as that between the final arrangement that they are to be married and the wedding-day itself. But the principal performers of the scene are so wrapped up in each other, that they become unfit for general society, and to quiet lookers-on the performance is any thing but agreeable. We will therefore

spare the reader the details of a four months' engagement, and ushering him into the spring-time of the year, we will seek our hero and heroine in the Zoological Gardens, precisely one week before the day fixed for their wedding.

"Are they not lively dears?" said Clara.

"What,—the monkeys?" replied David. "Yes, sufficiently so to make a human being never wish to be lively."

"Oh, nonsense! Look at that grave cogitating monkey by himself in the corner,—surely he is more laughable than his neighbours. Since we must resemble them, be as much like the merry ones as possible, I beg of you."

"Come and walk with me in a more retired path," pleaded the lover.

"Why so?" replied Clara; gently yielding.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "you cannot fully enter into my feelings,—you have loved before."

"You are very impertinent," said Clara, "to impute any thing of the kind to me. But I do not mean to spoil you by allowing you to suppose that *you* are 'my first love, my *only* love.' You, too, cannot deny that you have loved long before we met."

"Never," replied David.

"Never!"

"No, never,—I never professed the slightest preference for any one before I saw you."

"Indeed!" said Clara, and at that moment they approached the elephant's play place, and among the numbers who were assembled round it was a lady who came forward to David with a most insinuating smile.

"Surely I cannot be mistaken," said she in a voice of sweetest tone: "Mr. Dumps, I believe?"

David bowed.

"Oh, you really must not forget *me*. Do you not remember those *sweet* days we passed together at Malvern, when that *dear* Lavinia was with me?"

"Who was *dear* Lavinia?" whispered Clara maliciously.

"I know you *doted* on Lavinia, and I've often thought

she was very silly; but Claverton and she are gone to *sweet Italy*. Claverton is a *dear* fellow, after all."

"I hope Mr. Jones is well?" said David, feeling it necessary to say something.

"Yes, tolerable,—that is, *for him*. He's quite my misery—gout, rheumatism, and lumbago. And *such* lodgings as we have!"

"I shall do myself the pleasure of calling."

"Oh no, don't,—there's no Lavy now, and the stairs are vile,—I'm at home to nobody. But I've heard of *your* intended marriage," added Mrs. Jones; and putting up her glass at Clara, she added in a half whisper, "Well, you could not expect another Lavy, young and lovely, and your soul's *first* idol. I wish you well, Mr. Dumps." And away she went.

"Well," exclaimed Clara, laughing, "this is really too good! You, who were so vehemently professing never to have smiled on a young lady before, are now actually convicted of a proposal, and a refusal!"

"All a misrepresentation, I assure you," said her admirer; and as they walked round the garden, he told Clara all his Malvern history.

"And," exclaimed Clara when he had finished, "do you really suppose that I wished for such an explanation; or that I, at my age, (rather older than yourself, I believe,) pretend to say that I never had a lover till I saw you?"

"That I never thought likely; but I can positively say, *I never loved till I saw you.*"

Luckily for David, they were now at the gate of the gardens; and when he had handed Clara into her father's carriage, she had barely time for a shake of the head and a knowing laugh ere she vanished from his sight.

But we have declared that we will not dwell upon these trivial details; and however much we may wish to keep our hero single, (and what is a hero when once he becomes a Benedict?) we now find ourselves hurried to the evening immediately preceding the wedding-day.

David and his intended were sitting together; he silently cogitating on the future—she inspecting the bridal dress and veil, which had just been brought home.

"A letter from our friends at Cockle Hall," said he after reading a despatch which had been delivered to him, "to remind us of our promised visit."

"Well," replied Clara, "it is all settled. We are to be with them the day after to-morrow, to take an early dinner, on our way to Bath."

"Yes, Cockle and Kilkenny will not return home until that day: they are gone to some party in the neighbourhood."

"Well, I leave all the arrangements to you," replied Clara: "to-morrow is Friday."

"Yes, by-the-by, we *ought not* to have been married on a Friday!"

"Nonsense!—on Saturday we shall reach our friends early."

"Yes," replied David; "we sleep within twenty miles of Cockle Hall."

"Another packet for you, I protest!"

"For me!" exclaimed David: "gloves—white gloves, of course; I wonder who sent them!" And he deliberately unfolded the paper. They were, as he supposed, a wedding present of gloves: and no doubt the donor had intended to send a dozen pair of white kid; but by some mischance, only eleven pair of white had been packed up, and the twelfth pair was one of *black kid for-mourning*! Clara leant back in her chair, laughing, when she saw them; but David threw them down, pale and trembling, and exclaimed,

"Oh, Clara, we *ought not* to marry on a Friday!"

But notwithstanding David's misgivings, at an early hour on Friday morning Baker-street was in a state of unusual excitement. The habitation of Miss Mildmay, generally the most tranquil house in the street, was besieged by various artisans at a period when the gentle spinster was on ordinary occasions slumbering in her own apartment.

She had liberally offered to give Clara a breakfast after the ceremony; and Gunter's men, with baskets, trays, and ice-pails, gave the note of preparation soon after daylight.

Then appeared maid-servants at the area gate dressed in their very best, eager to talk to the milk-woman, and

the muffin-man, and the baker who brought the three dozen extra rolls for the *déjeûné à la fourchette*; and Mr. Mildmay's man and Mr. Titterton's man having new liveries on the occasion, came and lounged at the door, apparently only to talk to one another, but in reality to show themselves to the maids at the two opposite houses, who were busy dusting their respective drawing-rooms.

Ten o'clock came, and the bridal party having some distance to go to church, (for David, faithful to old associations, would be married at that nearest to Burying-ground Buildings, Paddington Road,) Mr. Titterton's carriage came to the door, and was soon followed by Mr. O'Flaney's and Mr. Mildmay's. There were very few people to witness the departure of the little party to the church: it was too early for an assemblage of importance; but the maids had said enough to excite the curiosity of the muffin-man, and a Jew who sold old clothes stood by his side to see Clara in white satin and orange blossoms step into the carriage, followed by two lovely bridesmaids, and accompanied by her father, her uncle, and Mr. and Lady Betty O'Flaney.

But what was wanting to give effect and importance to the departure, was amply compensated for when the party about mid-day returned from the church. There was David's new chariot, and three more private carriages in addition to those we have already mentioned; and there were two or three cabs belonging to smart-looking men, who left their tigers in charge of the horses. Then there were six or eight hackney-coaches, nice clean yellow ones, evidently not taken at random, but judiciously selected from several stands. And there were at least six flies; but they ought to have been mentioned before the hackney-coaches, because, though they are drawn only by one horse, there is a sort of privacy and gentility about them with which jarvies cannot pretend to compete. In the rear of all, a few hack cabs were indistinctly seen: but perhaps we are injudicious in alluding to them.

The street, too, began now to assume an air of bustle and curiosity adequate to the occasion. The muffin-man having gone his rounds in unusual haste, had re-

sumed his post; and by his side was the old clothesman, whose bag was much swelled since we last saw him. The man with Punch and Judy lingered before the house; but, with singular good taste and delicacy of feeling, he refrained from exhibiting *his* hero and heroine, not wishing to throw into shade the bride and bridegroom. A band with drum and panspipes, and an organ, began a *charming* and appropriate melody; only the organ played in one key and the panspipes in another, and the drum was banged indiscriminately in no key at all. Immediately opposite to the windows, the Italian boy with images on a tray took his station; and another sallow dark-eyed urchin, who had a monkey tied to the end of a long string, allowed the beast to climb up to the balcony, and enter the drawing-room where the guests were eating the bridal breakfast.

Suddenly the monkey retreated from the drawing-room: there was evidently a movement among the guests; the hall-door opened, and David led forth Mrs. Dumps, handed her into the carriage, and seated himself by her side. Hands and handkerchiefs were waved from the balcony; the postilions in the red jackets and the white favours had their orders, and the four horses dashed off towards the Bath road, bearing behind them our happy couple. Surely at that auspicious moment even David Dumps forgot that his wedding-day was a Friday!

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHEN Becky Tatum "*breathed her last adieu*" to gentle George Arden near Napoleon's pillar on the hills by Boulogne-sur-Mer, it may be supposed that she really deeply felt her humiliation, and that she was not exaggerating when she said that she had received a lesson which would never be obliterated from her mind.

We fear that her unfortunate, though innocent, intimacy with a young man of whose birth, parentage, and education she knew nothing, may have very seriously prejudiced our readers against her: but let it be remem-

that there were some allowances to be made for

v-born and low-bred, she was sent to a high-polish-establishment, where she associated with girls determined to move in a sphere very different to her own, here, unfortunately, she also acquired habits and is utterly unfit for the pawnbroker's daughter. We

mean to say that the wives of courtiers and right rables have not started forth from pickle-jars, ng-bottles, and very possibly from the sanctorum *by uncle*," decorated with three brass balls over or: it would be well if courtiers and right honour-never descended *lower* than to the virtuous daughter of respectable retired tradesmen. But admitting tradesmen's daughters may make what are called marriages, and not stopping to inquire whether marriages are really satisfactory in their results, rely mean to state, that it often happens that the educated and refined daughter does not attract attention of some impoverished lordling or needy of a noble house; and then, when she leaves, what is to be her fate?

have seen that Rebecca Tatum's residence at Perfect's academy was prolonged beyond the usual; home was hateful to her, and she continued as of parlour-boarder long after her companions of an age had joyously returned home.

z, if Becky Tatum, thought her father an exceedingly vulgar, ungentlemanlike person, and felt his society very unbearable, it was not her own fault. All the ladies brought up at Miss Perfect's school would voted him intolerable; and Becky merely evinced aversion for bad manners which it was one of the objects of Miss Perfect to inculcate. Let us, then, do justice to the pawnbroker's daughter as to exclude her from at least a portion of the blame, and vledge that had she been sent to Mrs. Snooks's (where Tatum's neighbours Bubb the grocer and the hosier sent their daughters,) she would have stayed home, as it really was, a much finer place than Snooks's house; would have looked forward to holidays with delight; and would not only have

sworn eternal friendship for the Miss Bubbs and the Miss Wallops, but would also in due course of time very probably have become a member of one or other of those families. The great error lay, then, in the unpollished father and mother sending their only child to an instructress whose professed business it was to teach her to be as unlike them as possible, and to render her so refined and fastidious as to be miserable in their society. If such a girl marries, she is so far removed from them as to be little incommoded by their vulgarity; and if they can receive her aggrandisement as a recompense for the filial affection which they might have received from a girl differently brought up, the parents have nothing to complain of. But should she not marry, how wretched is the refined lady in the parlour of the unrefined parents!

Such was Miss Tatum's case, and she remained at school until the death of her mother. That she was anxious to marry is certain: she thought of a prolonged residence at Blackheath with horror. When Mr. George Arden uttered many things very flattering to her vanity, seeing that he looked like a gentleman, she began to hope that he was the being destined to snatch her from a home she hated, and from the morning and evening visitations of the Miss Wallops and the Miss Bubbs, and, above all, the very pointed attentions of Mr. Anthony Wallop and Mr. Nathaniel Bubb—those gentlemen having latterly stepped forward as rival suitors for the honour of her hand and fortune.

We do not vindicate her clandestine encouragement of Mr. Arden; but we blame her parents more than herself. For her unguarded conduct, and for her connivance at the trick played off by her lover on poor unsuspecting Mr. Dumps, she was, as we have seen, most amply punished, and she returned to her father's lodgings full of shame and repentance.

She had met no one that morning in her walk but Captain Kilkenny. She afterwards passed him as if she was unconscious that she had ever seen him before; and she very soon prevailed on her father to leave Boulogne and return to Blackheath.

She there did every thing in her power to atone for

past; and though her father, good unsuspecting, never heard one word of the *sanguinary* meeting, influential to poor David's fate, and so distressing to Rebecca,) she felt that it was her duty by future action to make amends for past neglect and duplicity. She therefore assured him that Mr. Arden was dis-abled, and would never be again received by her; and having turned Mr. Dumps out of the house as the *cted go-between*, felt perfectly satisfied, gave his daughter a kiss, and asked no more questions.

Ed Tatum was overjoyed at Rebecca's change of opinion. She did not avoid him: she always came in to receive him when he returned from the city; would listen to him when he talked for half an hour or more about things utterly uninteresting to her; and would sit down and sing and play to him without resistance whenever he asked her, even though his favorite tune was "Merrily danced the quaker's wife," his chosen song "Billy Taylor was a brisk young fellow."

When the neighbours came to see her, she would sit silent smiling endurance, and look at them, and listen to them, and do her very best, until they all went away; then she would cry half the night in her own room. When Anthony Bubb she could not smile, to Nathaniel Pop she could not listen; and when the more muscular and richer Nat drove from the field the weak but offensive Tony, nearly driven to distraction by his over-assertion, and by her father's urging her to "give him a snubbing him, and to make up her mind to take it for better or worse, as he was a werry nice young fellow and not to be sneezed at," she became seriously annoyed, when her father was frightened at her nervousness, prevailed on him finally to send the nice young fellow about his business, she readily seconded the advice of the physician, and they went to Cheltenham for change of air and scene.

The accomplishments which she had acquired at Miss Fect's academy were now her greatest comforts; and during her father's frequent absences, (for he never was happy without going to see what was doing at

what he was pleased to call "his counting house,") her harp and pianoforte were her only companions.

It so happened, however, that she one day met in the Well-walk one of her old school-fellows with whom she had been very intimate. She was now married, and at her house Miss Tatum spent many most delightful evenings; and there she first met Mr. Lorimer Lomax.

No one will wonder that *he* should admire the pretty and interesting heiress: her admirable playing and the melody of her voice were alone sufficient to captivate him. That he should in time seek her, engage her attention, woo her, and win her, notwithstanding a certain disparity of years, will perhaps appear less surprising, when it is remembered the life that she had lately led, and that the hateful persecutions of a Bobb and a Wallop threw into most favourable contrast the delicate and respectful attentions of one who united with polished and gentlemanlike manners, an amiable disposition, and no small taste for the science in which she so eminently excelled.

Miss Tatum resided in Cambray Place, within a few doors of Miss Titterton; and when Mr. Lomax on moonlight nights paraded that street with his light guitar, many supposed that the deserted Clara was the fair object that attracted him.

After meeting that young lady at the house of Mr. O'Flaney, he became on terms of intimacy; and she, knowing his former acquaintance with David, encouraged his visits, being all the time well aware of his attachment, and, indeed, engagement, to her fair neighbour. All this occurred after David's abrupt departure from Cheltenham; and gentlemen of a certain age having no time to lose, every thing was arranged during the two months which our hero passed so miserably in Arundel-street, Strand: Lomax, having heard from Rebecca the particulars of her former acquaintance with David, (for she was too *thoroughly* reformed and had too much good sense to conceal such events from the man who was to be her husband,) he, in a letter to Kilkenney, written the day before his marriage, briefly stated that his future wife had been "*a former flame*" of David's; and thus was he led to suppose that he was

cleared from the charge of murder and robbery, at the very moment when she for whose sake he had so earnestly prayed that his innocence would be established was lost to him for ever. After their marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Lorimer Lomax spent a few days at Malvern, and then returned to Cheltenham and established themselves in a house on the Promenade, where David found them in the manner we have already described.

CHAPTER XXV.

IF it be indiscreet to accompany lovers in the confidential rambles which immediately precede the wedding-day, ought we not, when we shut them up in their travelling-carriage, and see the lady's maid safely seated by the gentleman's man in the rumble behind, to wish them every possible happiness, and making our best bow, leave them to themselves?

Let us then turn our attention to Mr. Cockle and his friend Kilkenny, who having been absent from Cockle Hall for some days, were, as we have already stated, to arrive there early on Saturday, for the purpose of receiving Mr. and Mrs. Dumps at dinner. In order to facilitate this arrangement, they were to leave the house of their present host on the evening of the eventful Friday, to sleep at an hotel twenty miles from Cockle Hall, and to ride home immediately after an early breakfast the next morning.

It was a clear moonlight evening towards the end of May, when the friends left the hospitable roof of their host, and proceeded towards the hotel where they had agreed to pass the night, and from whence in the morning they would only have an easy ride of about twenty miles.

"What a glorious night!" said Cockle; "and what a day for a wedding! Would you ever have supposed that poor David Dumps would be so fortunate?"

"No, certainly not," replied Kilkenny. "Poor fellow! I always really felt that, though we laughed at his

distresses, a really tragic end awaited him. Where do they sleep to night?"

"Indeed I don't know;—somewhere near town I suppose."

"Well, strange as it may seem," said Kilkenny, "for no one has laughed at poor David's foibles more than myself, I shall be right glad to see him to-morrow."

"Nonsense! what can you suppose will happen to him?"

"Why, I hardly know: nothing beyond a damp bed you'd suppose possible; and even that, on such an occasion, would not be a probable mischance."

"Certainly not," replied Cockle; "and here we are at the hotel."

They rode into the inn yard, and pulled lustily at the bell. The hostler appeared to take care of their horses, and a waiter well known to both of them came forth to usher them into the house.

"Give *me* my old room," said Cockle, "and my friend can have one near me."

"Dear, dear!" cried the waiter, "how unlucky!"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, if we had but known you were coming! we should never have put them there new-married folks into that there room!"

"What folks—and what room?"

"Why, the room you always has, sir. A new-married couple arrived from London, and we put 'em in it; and we *guv* the gentleman the room as your friend would have had, next to it, for a dressing-room."

"Well," said Cockle, "it can't be helped: give *me* and my friend some other well-aired rooms, which will answer our purpose as well."

John retired to give the necessary orders; and Cockle and Kilkenny awaited the arrival of supper in a very comfortable apartment before a blazing fire.

The host himself, a personage well to do in the world, and well known in the county, condescended to place before Mr. Cockle the principal feature of his repast. This led, of course, to a recognition; and while Cockle was cutting off the wing of his roast fowl, he asked

Mr. Noakes, as a matter of course, what news was stirring in the neighbourhood.

"Have you been full lately?" inquired Kilkenny.

"Far from it, sir," replied Noakes.

"But," said Cockle, "we are not your *only* inmates to-night, I presume?"

"Oh no, not *quite* that," replied Noakes.

"Have you many in the house?"

"Only two—a lady and gentleman, a man and a maid-servant,—a bridal party, in fact."

"Ay, so I remember your waiter told us: whence do they come?"

"From London."

"Do you know the name?"

"Oh yes,—a very odd name,—Dumps!"

Cockle and Kilkenny looked at each other, but said nothing; and after a short delay the host retired.

"Well," said Kilkenny after he and his friend had been left quietly to the enjoyment of a good fire and a bottle of wine; "this is the oddest coincidence!"

"Say nothing about it," replied Cockle, "and they will never know we have accidentally been inmates of the same hotel: they have retired to rest long ago,—it is now very late."

"Well," replied Kilkenny, "I have no inclination to leave this fire; let us for once in a way have a comfortable chat."

"With all my heart," replied Cockle; "but we will ring for the waiter, order chamber candles and slippers, and allow no one to sit up for us."

About one o'clock Mr. Cockle took his chamber candle, and still talking and still laughing, loitered with it in his hand.

"What noise is that?" said he suddenly.

"Noise? I heard none," replied Kilkenny.

"Hush!" said Cockle.

"What can you mean?"

"Why, I heard a door open and shut."

"Singular event, in an hotel of this magnitude!"

"Do be quiet," said Cockle: "I hear somebody pacing along the gallery."

"Well, and if you do," replied Kilkenny, "you do

not mean to pretend that you expect a captain of banditti?"

"No, no,—but listen."

A voice was heard on the stairs, calling "Chambermaid!" and after several repetitions of the cry, the unfortunate damsel roused herself, and wrapping around her something proper, descended and inquired what was wanted.

"There's a strong smell of fire," said the wanderer.

"Fire, sir!—no, sir!—Where, sir?—Don't smell it, sir!"

"I smell it very strong,—a smell of burnt wood," cried the stranger.

"Burnt wood," whispered Cockle, pointing to their wood fire; "we are the delinquents—hush!"

"Don't smell it at all," said the housemaid. "Every soul's gone to bed, and every fire has been out several hours."

"Indeed!" replied the fire-seeker; "then it is more serious than I had supposed: it must be some massive beam smouldering."

"Lord, sir! how can you have them fancies!"

"I smell it strong," replied David (for there was no mistaking his voice); "and Miss Titterton smells it worse than I do!"

"Miss who?" exclaimed the chambermaid with an air of offended dignity.

"*Mrs. Dumps*, I mean," said David in confusion, correcting himself; "Mrs. Dumps is very much alarmed."

"Lau! what noses you must have!" cried Betty. "If I'd been you, I wouldn't have smelt nothing if the town had been in tinder!"

"Do you hear?" said Kilkenny.

"Hush!" replied Cockle: "it would be cruel to let him know we are here."

"I'll tell you what," exclaimed Mr. Dumps, "I must and will speak to the master of the house—call him directly, for I *do* smell it shocking strong."

Betty went away to call the host; and David, with his chamber candle in his hand, and clad very much as people are who ought to be in bed, paced wearily up and down the long gallery.

At length the host made his appearance, wrapped up in a dressing-gown, and looking by no means pleased with his untimely tormentor. Still his urbanity of manner did not forsake him, and with the utmost politeness he inquired what the gentleman and lady could possibly want.

"We smell fire, sir," replied David.

"Fire!"

"Yes,—wood,—a beam, something out of sight: it will break out by-and-by."

The host sniffed, as in duty bound, all over the house, and then returned to assure him that there was no cause for alarm.

"I certainly *do* smell fire," persisted David.

"Well," said the host, "a party accustomed to burn wood at home have had a wood fire here to-night."

"Now that accounts for it," replied David: "why did you not tell me so before?"

"There was no cause for alarm, I assure you," said he; "it did not occur to me before to mention the wood fire; but fire is what I dread least in this house."

"Indeed!"

"Yes."

"Nothing so horrible!" said David.

"But I have a reservoir at the top of the house, which holds sufficient to put out the worst fire that we are ever likely to see."

"Well," exclaimed Mr. Dumps, taking up his candle, which had been placed on a table, "that is a *very* great comfort. I'll go and tell Mrs. Dumps that; and it will make her easier in her mind: for certainly we *did* both smell fire."

"Go and quiet the lady's mind, I beg," said the host.

"I will endeavour," replied David; and in a few moments the host had gone back to the place from whence he came, and David had again retired to the bridal chamber to argue Mrs. Dumps out of her apprehension of fire, and to assure her that, had such a calamity existed, there was water enough immediately over their heads effectually to stop its progress.

As soon as the house was again quiet, Cockle opened

the door of his sitting-room, and softly treading on tip-toe, he and Kilkenny proceeded to the apartments provided for them.

There is something peculiarly striking in the deep repose and silence of a large and much-frequented hotel. How many people from different parts of the globe may be collected under that roof who *never*, by the most strange and unforeseen combination of circumstances, can *all* meet together again! People of the most opposite pursuits and habits,—the young, the old, the rich, the poor; the luxuriously rich, cavilling at accommodations so inferior to those that await them at home; and the abjectly poor, who have no home to go to, and who leave the hotel to go forth and buffet with the world!—all pausing on some long or, to them, eventful journey; all sleeping, or trying to sleep, ere they go forward to struggle in a career which may end in disappointment, or to mingle with friends who may flatter and betray. As we pass along the passage of a crowded hotel, we peep into every pair of boots placed like sentinels at the different doors, and we think to ourselves what tales could be unravelled were each pair to step forth and tell the history of its owner.

The inn where we now find ourselves was, however, but thinly peopled, and the repose which for a time prevailed was the more natural. Cockle and Kilkenny having exchanged a whispered “good night,” each closed his door, and very speedily sought his pillow; and after a ride in the keen air by moonlight, both were soon buried in profound slumber.

But, hark! what a shrill scream rings through the hotel where we have lingered for the last few hours! So earnest, so piercing was the cry, that in one moment it roused every inmate of the large mansion, and it contained not one sleeper.

What could it be! All was dark, and for some few moments no sound was heard; but then again the same shrill voice rang through every chamber. The host, who had already been once roused, turned round and listened, and tried to go to sleep again, persuading himself it was all fancy. But Cockle and Kilkenny, and every waiter, boots, and chambermaid, huddled on what-

ever came to hand, (and in some instances that was very little,) and met at the top of the principal staircase.

"I hear nothing!" said Cockle.

"Oh!" cried the chambermaid, "but there has been *such* cries!"

"It is all nonsense;—the peacock in the yard,—or—"

"Hush!" interrupted Kilkenny; and the same cry was repeated, and actually rang through the vast mansion!

"This way," cried Cockle; and, led by the sound, he proceeded along a corridor, followed by Kilkenny and the rest.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed he at length, pausing in dismay, "the sound proceeds from the room I have been accustomed to occupy. And listen,—it has subsided into low murmurs of pain, or bursts of hysteric laughter!"

"The bridal chamber!" whispered the chambermaid, as white as a sheet, and trembling from head to foot.

"Look!" cried Kilkenny, pointing to the floor; and from the crevice of the door trickled a dark liquid, which ran along the oak boards to the opposite side of the passage.

"Blood!" cried the chambermaid, fainting away.

"Blood!" gasped the waiter, trying to catch her.

"Blood!" shouted the boots in an agony of fear.

"Blood!" ejaculated Kilkenny, in an accent of painful surprise.

"Blood?" said Cockle, in a tone of inquiry; "then we must force the door, for it is fastened within;" and, stepping back some paces, he raised his foot and applied it so vehemently against the woodwork, that it at length yielded.

A fresh stream gushed forth as the portal opened.

"More blood!" cried the waiter; and he dropped the chambermaid.

"More blood!" groaned the boots.

All rushed eagerly forward into the bridal chamber, which was dimly lighted, and there was a mysterious gurgling sound which bewildered them. At first nothing was distinct; but they soon perceived Clara, attired just

as she had left her bed, crouching down in the distant corner of the room, while the bridegroom, equally in *dishabille*, stood over her holding a large umbrella!

At this moment the host in a breathless state joined the party, exclaiming,

"I can explain the cause of alarm. The reservoir at the top of the house, containing hundreds of hogsheads of water, has burst immediately over these apartments."

"Shut them out!" cried David, peering from under his umbrella, and shocked at this untimely intrusion, though the water poured in torrents through the ceiling.

"Let them in," exclaimed Clara, laughing and screaming by turns: "I'm half drowned."

"You would not, surely," whispered David, pointing to the half-clad figures grouped around the chamber door.

"Indeed I would," replied Clara. "Here, chambermaid, fetch me a dry blanket, and let us have a good fire immediately in another room."

The gentlemen, of course, retired as soon as the real cause of disturbance had been ascertained, and the chambermaid very soon prepared more comfortable quarters for the bride and bridegroom.

"Well!" said Clara, as she sat with her feet on the fender, prudentially sipping *something warm* after her unexpected shower-bath, "I am glad to see you can laugh at our adventure."

"I can laugh with you," replied David, stirring up his tumbler of brandy and water; "but had such an event befallen me alone, I'm certain I should have died."

"More shame for you! But I hope to make you always laugh at the lighter ills of life; and as to weightier troubles, if it be our lot to encounter them, for my sake you must meet them bravely,—conquer them if you can—"

"Ay, but there are some which we cannot conquer."

"Endure them with resignation, then."

"For your sake, Clara, I will try and be all you wish."

"Then we will always date the dawn of our happiness *from the Flood*."

"Do you think we can keep this ridiculous accident secret?" said David.

"Not a chance of it," replied Clara, laughing; "for among those who peeped into our chamber I distinctly saw Mr. Cockle and his friend."

"Indeed! Then I can never face the party to-morrow."

"Indeed we will," replied Clara; "and I will show you how to blunt the edge of ridicule. We will laugh so heartily at the absurdity of our own dilemma, that we will defy them to outlaugh us."

"An excellent plan; and had I always followed it, I should have made light of many events which seemed to me miseries, and joined in many a laugh which almost made me cry."

"Well, there is no occasion to cry to-night, for I trust we shall neither of us feel the worse to-morrow."

"I hope not," replied David, laughing; "but you know all this comes of being married on a Friday!"

CONCLUSION.

AND now to conclude. We all meet at Cockle Hall to offer congratulations to the bride and bridegroom, and possibly to laugh over their untimely adventure. Had we been writing a serious story, we should now be obliged to gather together all the various little threads of our discourse, enter into most embarrassing explanations, and point our moral.

Our story has, however, been a mere extravaganza—a comic farce, after a more serious drama; and though indeed in our memoirs of the early life of Mr. David Dumps a little moral may be just *hinted* and *implied*, none will be *insisted* on.

Cockle Hall being twenty miles on the Cheltenham side of Bath, a summons had been sent to the Lomaxes and O'Flaneys; and they having availed themselves of Mr. Cockle's invitation to dine and sleep, considerably added to Mr. Dumps's annoyance when he arrived with his bride.

"Now, remember," said Clara, ere she quitted their travelling carriage and led the way into the house, "I'll

have no melancholy looks, no creeping into corners because you are laughed at, thereby giving people a new cause for ridicule."

"I won't, if I can help it, my dear."

"Help it!—do as I do—follow me—laugh when I laugh—and anticipate all they intended to say."

"If I laugh when you laugh, my love," replied David, offering his arm, "I shall be always laughing."

"So much the better."

"Then I'm sure nobody will know me."

"Then they'll give me credit for having effected a happy transformation."

They were in a moment surrounded by their friends, whose hearty congratulations Clara speedily interrupted by a detail of their recent trouble, telling her story with a comic effect which completely threw into shade the ridicule of other people, and laughing with an unaffected joyousness peculiar to herself.

And there must have been a spell in that laugh, for it found an echo even in David! His consternation, however, may be imagined when Clara thus addressed Lady Betty O'Flaney:

"I need not introduce my husband to your ladyship, I know; you have met before."

"Never mind, Mr. Dumps," said the lady good-humouredly: "let them laugh at our little adventure if it amuses them;—I was sorry you suffered so much annoyance on account of your mistake."

"He always seems to get into trouble at hotels," replied Clara.

"Then," said Mrs. Lomax, "never go to one again: when you are tired of Bath, pay us a visit."

The *déjeûné*, or rather the early dinner, passed pleasantly away, and the equipage of Mr. and Mrs. Dumps appeared to carry them on to Bath, where lodgings had been secured for them in Gay Street. There was a time when David would have preferred the abbey churchyard; but "from *grave* to *Gay*" was a transition which had been accomplished by Clara.

The sun shone brightly; and Cockle Hall appeared in David's eyes a very different place to that in which he had spent a long dreary day a few months before.

He bade a cheerful adieu to the friends who collected round the door, handed his wife gaily into the carriage, stepped lightly in after her, and, as it drove off, leant back and joined Clara in her laughter.

"You may well laugh," said he; "I'm sure you can hardly know me."

"You have acted your part admirably!—now you must never relapse into gloom."

"Nay," replied David, looking serious; "in *this* world, Clara—"

"I know what you are going to say; but you misconceive my meaning. Never impute want of feeling to those who are most merry. No one could feel a serious misfortune more acutely than myself: but do, pray, in future, keep serious grief for serious grievances."

"But sometimes it is difficult not to be seriously annoyed at what others may deem trifles."

"I don't see that," replied Clara.

"Why, for instance:—a hoax—a practical joke—"

"Oh, if an intimate friend injudiciously annoys you, try and forget the annoyance, remembering that he could have no bad motive. If a hoax is attempted by one unauthorised to take such a liberty—"

"Ay,—what then?"

"Oh, *then*, were I a man, I'd find a way to correct impertinence, without a diminution of my own cheerfulness."

"You are right," said David. "Well, then, there are anonymous letters?"

"Surely you would not suffer an anonymous letter, that last and lowest weapon of cowardly blackguardism, to annoy you!"

"Why," replied David, "not one addressed *to myself*; but they are sometimes addressed to our associates, to lower us in *their* estimation."

"Well, then, contemptible as I consider the *writer* of an anonymous letter, I think that the person who could for one moment be influenced by one is quite as bad!"

"I see you make light of all my little grievances."

"And so shall you in future," replied Clara.

And so he did!

But, instead of spending the honeymoon with Mr. and Mrs. Dumps at Bath, we must now take a parting glance at the elders we have so long neglected.

Old Tatum was delighted when his daughter married a gentleman, and entered a society which by education she was fitted to adorn. He thought he should miss her, but he did not: on the contrary, though he never allowed it even to himself, he felt it a relief when he could sit alone at dinner, eat peas with his knife, and be as vulgar as he pleased.

Mr. Titterton did miss Clara sadly: her birdlike song and merry laugh were heard no more; and when absent from the new-married couple, his chief solace and amusement was forming little plans for future meetings. Mr. Mildmay was almost as fond of Clara as her father, and at his death he left her husband the whole of his property, on condition that he changed his name to Mildmay.

And now, three years after their marriage, we find Mr. and Mrs. Mildmay sitting in their nursery. Two girls are calmly reposing; and David is nursing on his knee his son and heir, Master Johnny, now two months old.

"What a nice good little boy it is!" exclaimed the fond father.

"Like his papa," replied Clara, laughing.

"Not a bit of it: his dimples are yours. It is early to think of it, perhaps, but I'll tell you what I have been thinking of: I don't quite know what profession to choose for him."

Clara's laughter interrupted him.

"Well, Clara, I knew you would laugh; but the boy must be *something*. If he have *health* and *intellect*, his independent fortune may preserve him from many of the *real* ills of life; and it must be our care that *occupation* shall preserve him from *imaginary* evils."

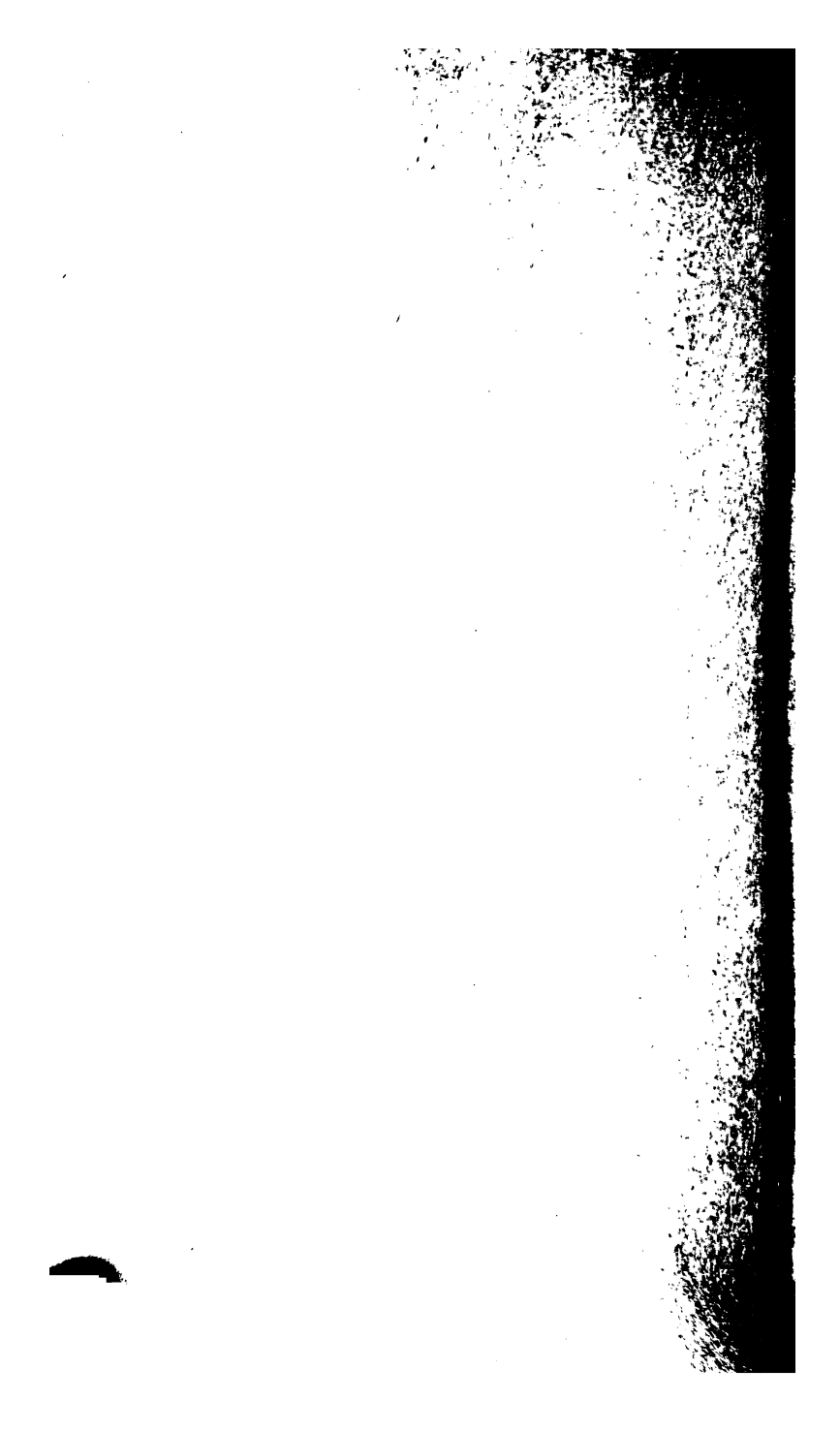
THE END.



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